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An Economic Inquiry
into the Religious and Political
History of Israel

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FRANCIS NEILSON

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New York

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To the Memory of

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F. N.

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INTRODUCTION

This inquiry into the reasonableness of the stories told in Mark and Matthew of the birth, life, mission and death of Jesus was begun nearly sixty years ago. I became a candidate for a parliamentary constituency in 1902, and after speaking in the towns and villages, I realized that the great majority of my supporters were Nonconformists. The ministers of the various sects welcomed me and after a few years they invited me to deliver anniversary sermons at their chapels. One reason for this was that I bore no label. No one asked me what sect I belonged to, but they regarded me as a religious man who had a message to give to the people. Many were amazed to hear me speak of the Bible and the New Testament and give examples from them in political speeches. It was something new to them to regard the economic and political troubles of the people from a religious standpoint.

I never entered into a controversy with any of them about reasons for the wide differences that separated the various bodies. There were Wesleyans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Unitarians, and many of these came to my meetings and approved of the economic and political principles I discussed from the platform. It was a time when the Balfour Education Bill was being debated in Parliament, and there was great disfavor of it shown by Nonconformists, who formed the famous passive resistance movement. Lloyd George led the revolt and, because he would not pay his local rates, his household goods were sold at auction. He was the first passive resister.

The grave question raised by the bill gave me my first opportunity of putting together in a pamphlet my views of it and of setting forth what I thought was necessary for education in the common schools of the country. I advocated the reading of the Bible to the young, without denominational interpretation. To my mind it represented the broad basis of all that was fine in the English tongue; indeed, if our literature was to be understood, it should be an essential study. It had been, since the days of Wyclif and Coverdale, the guide-manual of ninety-five per cent of the homes of the country.

After several years' speaking in many parts of England, and experiencing hotly contested by-elections, I wondered why it was that the vast majority of Nonconformist bodies could agree on certain political principles but not upon religious ones. Yet, to keep clear of controversy, I never discussed this matter with the ministers of the various sects, and they never questioned me about my beliefs. The clergy of the Church of England gave me the cold shoulder everywhere, and Roman Catholics were so scarce in my first constituency that I do not remember passing the time of day with one. Many of the villages were livings of the squire, and the church was the only religious building. Many Nonconformists had to walk long distances to chapel. But in the small towns there would be perhaps four or five places of worship where different members gathered on Sunday.

These people were Christians. Most of them were engaged in agriculture. A more competent lot of farmers it would be hard to find in England. In the towns, the business of merchandise was carried on by shrewd men, and on market days the people flocked in from the country with their products, and exchanged them for the necessaries of their larders, kitchens, and wardrobes. It was a sight to see them on a fine afternoon, moving about from shop to shop. A happier people it would have been hard to find. Whatever cares they had in the family were not shown on their faces.

In the homes of farmers and merchants I was often given hospitality for a day or two, and everywhere I went I was impressed with the way they lived. Then, family life in these small towns and villages was so different from what it is today that one who knew it would scarcely believe it would be wrecked by war and heavy taxation. Some of the most interesting visits during the six years of my candidature in this division were made to the cottages of agricultural laborers, navvies and miners. Here I found some local preachers—men who went here and there on Sunday afternoon to speak in chapels, or in the summer time, if there were no chapel in the village, they would address a small gathering in the open air. How I admired these men!

There were two in particular I grew to know well. One was a navvy on a single-track railway line. His cottage was thatched, and he had a garden of about an acre and a half. Shyly he showed me his small library of about fifty books, and when I looked into some of them I found fly-leaves upon which he had written notes he probably used in his sermons.

The other was a cowman, who must have been between sixty and seventy, and looked as if he were about forty. He had taught himself, for there was no school in the neighborhood he could attend when he was a boy, since he was born and bred of Primitive Methodist stock. He had Corn Law pamphlets that his father once possessed, and a well-worn copy of John Richard Green's *A Short History of the English People.*

At that time there were no motor cars, and after I took a small villa in the constituency, I rode long distances on my bicycle to meetings and enjoyed every hour of the time spent in going and returning. There was a wholeheartedness shown by the people who gathered about me, which made me feel that they accepted me as one of them. It is not too much to say that they were a God-fearing lot; "fearing" in the sense of breaking His law.

But there was another side to the picture. The squirearchy and the Church were strong deterrents to the aspirations of these people. Some of the vicars and other clergymen of the Established Church did not always behave as Christians, and because of their opposition to the spread of Nonconformity, I was told that there was good reason why the chapel people bore them no love. Near the village where I lived, the Nonconformists tried for years to build a place of worship, but the squire would not sell a plot to them. They had to travel five miles on Sunday in traps and carts to worship in a chapel of their sect.

These antagonisms among Christians affected me gravely, but there was nothing I could do to heal the breach. The difference between a Tory and a Liberal was wide, but the difference between the squire and his vicar and a Nonconformist parson and his elder was wider and deeper. It is only when you have lived in an agricultural constituency such as the one for which I was a candidate that you become conscious of these strange frictions among religious denominations.

It was about this time that a revolt took place against the usual church service, and there was instituted what was called a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon. At first only men were permitted to attend, and no minister was invited to take the chair or sit upon the platform. It was a very simple service, which lasted only an hour. One great feature of it was the singing of the hymns, for many of the men who attended were members of choral societies or sang in the choirs of the chapels. A chapter was read from the Bible, and a speaker was given forty minutes for an address upon any subject but a political one.

Within a few years I traveled far and wide in England and Wales, addressing meetings on Sunday afternoons. The subjects that I presented to them were an interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount, the meaning of the concluding verses of Isaiah 65, and the poetry of the Psalms and the Song of Solomon. Frequently I received invitations from the directors of a branch asking me to speak upon the Sermon on the Mount. It seemed to have become a favorite with the men. Although these people who assembled on Sunday afternoons were members of the various Nonconformist parties, instead of attending their chapels, they preferred a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon devoted to discussing many subjects that no one would think of delivering from a pulpit in any place of worship.

After a few years' experience, I and others founded the Brotherhood Movement, to which over a million men belonged before the First World War. At Brotherhood meetings I have spoken to as many as two or three thousand in a large town hall, and they were as eager to hear me speak on the philosophy of Jesus as the men were who attended the Pleasant Sunday Afternoons.

The more time I gave to the Brotherhood Movement, speaking nearly every Sunday far away from London where I lived then, the more time seemed to be demanded from different parts of the country for my services, which were, of course, purely voluntary. No speaker was paid for an address to a Brotherhood meeting. To my surprise I was invited to speak in Scotland, where at that time there was no branch of the Brotherhood. At a great meeting in one of the large theaters of Glasgow to an audience that filled it, I gave my interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount. Why I should have been amazed at the way it was received I can scarcely tell, but the chairman said to me afterwards, "You ought to speak in Glasgow every day for a month."

I had a similar experience at a great meeting in Edinburgh. There was no doubt in my mind now that a secret of uniting men in one religious body was contained in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, if denominational interpretations were ruled out. It was about that time that Alfred Zimmern wrote an article for one of the English monthlies (I think it was the *Nineteenth Century*). In it he said that the generation to come would be deep in the study of the life of Jesus. This from a man of high academic attainment spurred me to devote my leisure to tracing the controversies of the New Testament scholars from the days of David Strauss and Ernest Renan.

It was no easy task I set myself, for the literature on the subject was voluminous. And, looking over the catalogue of a library, I found that there were about fifty works upon the subject that I should examine, written by English and foreign authors. I set to work, and since that time I have tried to follow the exegesis of those who have devoted themselves to the Aramaic and Greek versions of the New Testament.

Before I knew of Ranke or Renan or Tolstoy, or what any other acclaimed thinker thought of Jesus, I realized that he was the deepest thinker of all ages. It was the men who assembled to hear me speak at the Brotherhood meetings before the First World War who should be given the credit for the judgment that I have formed of the man of Nazareth. It was their questions that spurred me on to read all that was possible for one limited to his native tongue.

In pursuing my studies of Jesus, it was my heartfelt admiration for him and his philosophy that inspired me. There are those, of course, who think this is no job for an amateur. Usually it is regarded as one for the theologian or the higher critic. I was once told by the president of a university that only academic scholars were devoted to a study of this order, and he wondered why I thought my views would be considered worthy of discussion by readers of the works of theologians.

From one scholar I got the impression that he did not approve of a layman's interest in this work; it seemed that I was looked upon as a trespasser upon their preserves. In pondering these observations, I asked myself to whom were the glad tidings of Jesus given? Aside from his colloquies with the rabbis in the synagogue, we may state that the Gospel of Jesus was addressed to the poor people of Galilee, and the message was delivered not in Hebrew nor in Greek, but in the tongue of the folk, Aramaic. This is often overlooked or challenged, but as I shall point out later, he did not use any other language but that of his people.

The good tidings were for simple village folk, and although they seldom understood the inner meaning of even his simplest statements, the power of his spirit, the clarity of his voice, his human kindness and sympathy for the oppressed touched their hearts, soothed their souls, and gave them hope of a heaven on earth.

In tracing the journey from Ur to Nazareth, I may sometimes wander from the beaten path and roam down lanes into fields of thought and speculation that seem only remotely connected with the principal narrative. Most of the repetitions are deliberately made as links in chains of evidence of opinion on the question under consideration, and also to save the reader turning back, page after page, to find out what was said on this problem or similar ones. I have always found it an unnecessary break in the continuity of the story to hark back to some statement that has already been made about the matter. It is, to my mind, most irksome, when the interest is deep, to jump from the middle of a page to a long footnote that might have been condensed and inserted in the body of the work, in brackets. This, of course, does not apply to scholars who have their own set way of presenting their material. But their works are for expert readers, and this, I hope, will appeal to the man of normal intelligence.

I suppose it would be a hard task now trying to convince students of theological seminaries of the extent of the intellectual turmoil that ensued after the publication of the *Origin of Species*. Charles Darwin's book was published just about one hundred years ago, but the debates it raised were rife in religious circles when I was a boy of ten or twelve years. The most eminent men in science and general literature were entangled in this polemical fray. Moreover, it was complicated by such works as those of Carl Vogt, the zoologist who could have been read only by scholars familiar with German. He was, however, quoted by the atheists and agnostics, in lectures and pamphlets.

In the autumn of 1914, I summed up what I considered to be the consequences of the turmoil of about two generations. I wrote:

> . . . How deep the thought of German humanists sank into the minds of British workingmen, during the period when our socialists of the Marxian school were introduced to the writings of Continental atheists, only those who have closely watched these tendencies can say.[1]

It would be hard for students of today to understand the searching of heart caused by such announcements as the following, from L. Bucher:

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[1] *How Diplomats Make War*, New York, B. W. Huebsch, 1915, p. 352.

> Theism or belief in a personal God leads, as all history clearly shows, to Monarchism and priestly rule; Pantheism or belief in an all-pervading God leads, where it is in the ascendency, to contempt of the senses, denial of the Ego, to absorption in God, and to a state of stagnation. Atheism or Philosophical Monism alone leads to freedom, to intelligence, to progress, to due recognition of man—in a word, to Humanism.[2]

It was at this time Socialists set to work to convert the working classes, and after lying dormant for nearly a generation, a new edition of *The Communist Manifesto* was published and circulated. Matthew Arnold was the one single champion to defend the best that was in the religious culture of Europe, but his works did not reach the working classes. They may be read today by students interested in controversies of the last half of the nineteenth century with advantage. From them it is easy to detect the trends of the time.

The schism was widened by the Charles Bradlaugh controversy, which arose when, as member for Northampton, he declined to take the oath in the House of Commons. In this country Robert Ingersoll was the champion of agnosticism.

The controversies that ensued after the period of Huxley and Tyndall reached nearly fever heat. And at the same time literature from Continental atheists and agnostics poured into England, and the contents of their works were ransacked by rationalists for quotations which they used in their pamphlets.

Perhaps the most favored of these was Auguste Comte. He was born at Montpelier, but spent most of his time in Paris where he taught mathematics for a short period. He soon made friends with Saint-Simon and imbibed from him the general notions of Socialism, as it was expounded long before Marx by Enfantin and Fourier. In an article I wrote for *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* on "Humanism, Yesterday and Today," I described the mission of Comte as follows:

> The reverberations of the French Revolution had scarcely died away when there was born one whose writings were largely responsible for the creation of a new school of humanists, who assumed great influence in England and America during the last half of the nineteenth century. Auguste Comte formed the Positive Society, and to his altar of rationalism there flocked many to worship the new god that he had created —humanity. He it was who dreamed of a science of society, and the principles and laws devised by him for a new utopia not only affected politicians but philosophers. It seems unbelievable now that the church of Comte should have been seriously considered by the utilitarians in England and in France. For they were associated with what was regarded as the great advance in scientific thought and the knowledge

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[2] *Ibid.*

> that was evident everywhere that society in the lump had failed to come anywhere near the realization of other dreamers, who had devoted themselves to its reformation.

Perhaps Comte expected too much of man and never got close enough to him to understand his waywardness. Otherwise he would not have announced:

> . . . In the name of the Past and of the Future, the servants of Humanity—both its philosophical and its practical servants—come forward to claim as their due the general direction of this world. Their object is to constitute at length a real Providence in all departments,—moral, intellectual and material. Consequently they exclude once for all from political supremacy all the different servants of God—Catholic, Protestant or Deist—as being at once behindhand and a cause of disturbance.[3]

On reading Comte the English rationalists called themselves positivists, but they never got so far as building a church where humanity might be worshiped. The real fact of the matter was these people did not know man, and that in his long history he preferred to worship a god of his own fancy, rather than one of his fellows. Man has shown all the way through that he knows his idol of worship does not live next door.

However, the work of Huxley and Tyndall was in another direction. Both were eminent scientists. They devoted much of their time to the movement for the promotion of knowledge and lectured often to working class audiences. Huxley would have none of the myths. The pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day that fell upon the earth were "imaginary." It did not occur to him that the mountain towards which Moses and the captives were traveling was a volcano and that at night the blaze from its crater resembled a pillar of fire. Why he should have thought that the darkness that fell upon the earth was strange is difficult to tell, because the London in which he lived suffered from similar atmospheric disturbances. To think that these ideas were held only one hundred years ago is in a way amusing. What Huxley would think, if he were alive today, about the discoveries of geologists and archaeologists cannot be imagined, so extraordinary is the change of thought that has taken place within three generations.

Tyndall's lectures were so novel and disturbing to the thought of the day that the august body of ruling scientists resented the tone and matter of them, and Tyndall was forced to resign his position. It is well that we should be reminded of the religious and philosophical turmoil that existed in the days of our grandfathers. What we know of the Bible was not known to them. The myths Huxley rejected as mere figments of the imagination are now given a substance accepted by scientists. So science triumphs over science. The skepticism of one generation is rectified by the findings of another.

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[3] This essay was included in *The Cultural Tradition and Other Essays*, Francis Neilson, New York, Schalkenbach, 1957, pp. 119-20.

Never in the history of the world were the minds of the masses so torn and distraught as they were by these bitter controversies. Many looked to the churches to reply to these nostrums, but they looked in vain. The usual counsel was "You must have faith." Then it was asked "Faith in what? Faith in whom?"

These were barren responses and as the mass of intelligent working men were left without leaders, the drift set in—at first slowly, gradually—from the churches. One pamphlet declared, "There is not a story in the first eight books of the Bible that has not been questioned." This may seem incredible to the students of today. But it should be remembered that the discoveries of the archaeologist and the pronouncements of the geologist had not begun, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, to substantiate some of the most important narratives, and ultimately to revolutionize the thought spread by atheists.

"Miracles do not happen" was the cry before that time. But the archaeologists nailed that statement down to stay put. And when geologists had explored the long rift down the Jordan to the Red Sea, evidence was yielded which showed that it was possible for the Israelites to cross, and that it was also no miracle that divided the waters of Jordan when Joshua and his army crossed over and besieged Jericho.

The students of today do not know how well off they are in having a store of evidence from scientists of the historical accuracy of the wanderings of the Israelites after they left Egypt until Hazor fell under the sword of Joshua and the tribes became settled in the Promised Land. All this may be read now without the doubt that perplexed the minds of sincere searchers for the truth when I was a young man. What a library these works form! It contains the most fascinating study to which man can apply his leisure, and small wonder that such works as Dr. M. A. Beek's *A Journey Through the Old Testament*[4] find eager readers. It not only reconstructs the fortunes and vicissitudes of the children of Jacob, but it presents the latest discoveries of the archaeologists and fits them into the gaps and omissions which are many in the early books.

The change that has taken place in the past fifty years is extraordinary. No one I met at the time of the Brotherhood Movement would have believed it possible. One of the most surprising changes of attitude of mind is that of many of the greatest theological scholars. At one time they regarded reason as something of an enemy of faith, and that the intellect, in questioning deeply, led to agnosticism. Ministers in many denominations now think differently, and perhaps it may be asserted that faith stands on firmer ground now than it did when parsons spoke to empty pews.

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[4] Trans. by A. J. Pomerans, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1959.

Someone has said that everything is in the Bible. Yes, everything that is essential for the conduct of life in amity is there. But what is most precious is the proper understanding of the term "justice," for it is the keystone in the citadel of God, which unites man to his Creator.

To make my purpose clear, it should be understood by the reader that the method I adopt in this work is to present the questions prevalent in the first years of this century, when the drift from the churches took place. I want to bring to light the doubts that disturbed them then and show how many of them have been cleared away by the discoveries of scientists. In this I shall hope to show that there are stories in the early Books of the Old Testament that may be accepted as myth or mere legend, but that they do not in any way affect or minimize the value of the ethical intention to be found in them. This is of paramount importance, for it is not only religious and economic; it has its political significance as well. There have been books written upon the economic background of the settlement of the tribes in Canaan, and there are several works which deal with the economic background of Jesus of Nazareth. But I know of no work that traces in sequence the causes that brought about the wars that ended with the dispersion and captivity of the Israelites by the Assyrians and the people of Judah by the Babylonians. To my mind the neglect of this matter has raised in the thought of some scholars uncertainties concerning its value. Some of them have considered it a mere subsidiary condition that affected all peoples alike when decay set in. Consequently, more thought has been given to the religious trials and tribulations of the tribes under Judges and the first three Kings. Hence, my desire to attempt to give proper significance to the economic rot that set in after the tribes received their separate portions of the Promised Land.

I shall use the term "economic" in a fundamental sense, that is: man as a land animal, who cannot work or live without using the source of his well-being. The term has been so much abused by the neo-economist that it has lost its old significance. It is now borrowed by statisticians, bookkeepers, bankers and retail merchants. I shall adhere all through to the Greek sense of the term, for man, the land animal, is the founder of religions and in primitive law he deified land and worshiped the goddess Mother Earth. Moreover, the first altars of which we have record were raised by man as shrines where he thanked the Creator for providing the source from which he drew his food. All mythologies tell the same story, and in the case of the Israelites, to occupy land was the first consideration of the command that was given to Abraham.

It is my intention to make the reader acquainted with the books that I have gathered and read (or, latterly, have had read to me) over a period of fifty years. When I lectured, before the last war, to audiences in theological seminaries and collegiate divinity schools, I was amazed to find certain books I referred to were unknown. I spoke to Dr. Shailer Mathews at the University of Chicago about this, and he gave, as an excuse, that much simpler works were used than those from the pens of archaeologists and geologists. Perhaps it is different now, for it must be twenty years or more since I spoke to audiences on the subject we are now dealing with.

I see no reason why the earnest, honest Bible student should limit himself in the pursuance of works that will help him to understand the early Books of the Old Testament. In them he will find an entirely new light thrown upon the miracles set out in Genesis and Exodus, and then be able to turn his attention to what is essential for an understanding of the spiritual, economic and political value of the history of the Israelites.

The intellect is a refinery in which the raw material of history is separated from myths and legends, that is, the folklore which existed before man inscribed his tales on stone, clay or papyrus. There have always been wonder-makers. Man was never satisfied with his own visible works, for he soon realized the limit of his productive powers. Hence, his desire to imagine a supernatural being who made thunder, flashed lightning, channeled rivers (such as the Nile, Euphrates and Tigris) for his boats, and made the sun shine. He even had a separate god for each purpose.

To us his faith seemed childlike, but faith he had, and perhaps in this way faith was born. There is a history of folklore that should never be despised. When we think of the most ancient of the myths and legends surviving long centuries, the many migrations, pestilences, and wars before man thought of carving a letter on clay or stone, we are amazed at the persistent endurance which kept them alive in the minds of such peoples as the Sumerians, the Egyptians and the Hittites. It is no longer safe for an educated man to scoff at an old tale, shrug his shoulders and say, "Mere legend," as so many did two generations ago. The geologist, the archaeologist, and the Bible historian, in recent years, have substantiated so many of the kernels of truth in myths that we are apt to forget how recent was the time when the cocksure rationalists had their heyday.

Now the same craving for wonders which possessed primitive peoples still existed in the minds of millions of Bible readers during the last half of the nineteenth century. I remember the days when a man was looked at suspiciously if he questioned any of the stories told in Genesis and Exodus. During that period the Nonconformist sects of Great Britain reached their apex. When I was a boy of twelve or thirteen, I used to see parents accompanied by their children going in crowds to their churches, chapels and synagogues. The neighborhood in which I lived had a Greek church, a synagogue, a ritualistic church, and ten or twelve places of worship of other denominations. These people took the stories of the Pentateuch literally.

Then how do you account for the astounding change in churchgoing that took place after the turn of the century? This question has been put to me many, many times, not only by ministers of the gospel, but by laymen perplexed by the drift from the churches. There were several reasons for it. Perhaps the chief reason was the fulminations of the rationalists and the doctrines of Marx, Engels and the Fabians. Alfred Orage, when he was editor of the *New Age*, spoke to me about it, and years afterwards, when he was my guest in Chicago, he referred to it again. He had come to America with Gurdjieff's troupe from Fontainebleau. Orage collected about him during his editorship the most brilliant group of literary men that had been seen in England since the days of Hazlitt. I was not surprised to learn after his death that he had told his biographer, Philip Mairet, that he had at last made up his mind to find God. Although this may seem to be a digression, it helps me to stimulate my memory about the causes advanced by the critics for the disheartening change when ministers complained of "preaching to empty pews."

Another cause for the drift, which keen observers of that day held to be of certain importance, was the revelations concerning the motive and the conduct of the Boer War. Upon this issue the Nonconformist churches were divided. Some congregations were split upon its advertised policy. Some ministers denounced it, a few had to resign, and there were shocking, riotous scenes at some churches. People were injured and windows were smashed. The riot at Bingley Hall, Birmingham, when Lloyd George denounced the war was only one, although perhaps the most notorious of these exhibitions of rancor. The *Daily News* of London and the *Manchester Guardian* suffered severely for their opposition to the government's South African policy. Hence, when the war was over and its scandals made known, those clergymen who had supported it saw their congregations dwindle away.

To my mind, war has had as much to do with the distressing changes that have taken place in churchgoing as any other cause. I know this was so after the First World War, but I am not prepared to say that there was much noticeable change after the second one. Perhaps there was nothing to change, for the nostrums of Socialism, as preached by the Socialist party, appealed to the majority of the British electorate. How strange that these changes seem to have affected only the Protestant bodies. The Catholic Church has remained unmoved by the schisms and desertions that have affected the other denominations.

Recently a reviewer in *The Times Literary Supplement*, commenting on the attempt being made by Catholics and Protestants alike "to restore the position of the Bible which to England's great loss was very seriously damaged, especially during the latter part of the nineteenth century," accounts for the change in this way:

> . . . For a time scholars, and they were deeply religious men, in almost every country were subjecting the Bible, its constituent books and its ideas, to most drastic criticism, and printing made possible the wide dissemination of ideas which, while legitimate enough as matters for learned debate, did immense harm when they reached people unable to estimate their value. People had scarcely time to adjust their minds to the obvious truth that a divine revelation and permanent moral principles could be conveyed in a story and that, for example, the account of the Tower of Babel had not necessarily to be regarded as the historically accurate explanation of the varieties of human speech, before they had to hear that parts of the Gospel narratives might be mistakes or deliberate inventions, and that the whole Gospel story might be a myth. It seemed as though the idea of the "Word of God" had vanished and its place been taken by an interesting collection of old documents which the learned would presently evaluate. . . .[5]

If the theologians are to restore the Bible to its place in our culture, they will have to meet the doubts of the masses and teach them from a new Didache that the Old Testament is our most precious heritage. Neglect of the Bible is a denial of our achievements which will endure.

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[5] *Loc. cit.*, Sept. 19, 1958. p. 533.

PART I

THE OLD TESTAMENT

CHAPTER I

IN THE BEGINNING

The men who made a success of the Brotherhood Movement were undoubtedly those who had attended Bible classes. They came from nearly all sections of the Nonconformist bodies. In many towns and cities ministers of their chapels cooperated with them in organizing meetings, choosing the speakers and selecting the subjects for the addresses. I have described elsewhere the order of the meeting and how it was conducted, but I do not remember telling the reader that heckling was not permitted, and questions were not put to the speaker after his address.

I cannot comment on the experience of other men who frequently addressed these meetings, but one of the many things that impressed me was the hour spent after the meeting discussing economics, history, drama and the books of the Old and New Testaments. Sometimes there would be two or three score of men ranging from eighteen to sixty or seventy, ready to ask questions and state what was on their minds. One of the problems that came up for discussion was the ambiguous idea of original sin. But the inquiries came from men advanced in life. The younger men seemed to take no interest in it. I was informed by a well-known Nonconformist minister who, after long years of service, had retired that, when he was a young man studying for the ministry, it was considered one of the most perplexing stories in Genesis to deal with.

I never gave an address on the subject but frequently discussed it with groups after the meetings, and I think it will be interesting to the reader to learn how I presented my views of it. The following is a summary of Nonconformist thought before the Brotherhood Movement started. Dr. Henry H. Halley sums it up in his *Bible Handbook*. From him we learn that it was the serpent who was to blame.

> . . . He inveigled Adam and Eve into Disobedience of their Creator. The dreadful work was done. And the pall of Sin and Gloom and Toil and Pain and Death fell upon a world which God had made so beautiful and "very good."
>
> Why did God make man so that he could sin? Well, is there any other way He could have made him, except as a machine, or an animal guided only by instinct?[1]

Of the four principal stories told in the early books of the Pentateuch, this is undoubtedly the one that has been a stumbling block in reasoning to millions of men. The others about Noah, about Abraham, about Jacob are comparatively simple by contrast.

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[1] Twentieth edition, Chicago, Illinois, 1955, p. 66.

If we begin with the creation of Adam, it is necessary to understand that the work achieved the production of a man, a human being. We cannot imagine that the God of the Garden of Eden would make a god; and the reason why man should have a companion, his complement, Eve, is clearly told in a verse that is often overlooked in this debate. In Genesis 1:28 the pronouncement is given: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it. . . ."

This was the command before we are told anything about the tree of knowledge or the serpent tempting Eve, and it surely indicates that no ideal creature had been produced, but a human being with human desires, with the power to satisfy them. The mysterious tree of knowledge is not solely a biblical invention. It is found in all the great mythologies—in those of Egypt, of Sumer, of Babylon. Why the penalty of eating one of its fruits should be damnation is left entirely to our imagination, and no matter how we puzzle about this matter, we always reach the point where the first command takes possession of our mind and we wonder how man can be fruitful and multiply if he has not knowledge; and what knowledge the human mind could harbor could possibly prevent the fulfilment of the command?

What was the evil fruit the first pair ate? There is no answer to this. And why in the Garden of Eden should any tree bear evil fruit? The only sense we can make of this is that the Creator desired to put man and woman to a useless test. Here we are not dealing with infants. They made their first appearance as adults, or anyway both had reached the stage of puberty, and they were not clothed. We presume they were reasonable beings and knew that they were naked before they ate the evil fruit. Therefore, there must have been some reason why original sin, the curse, became a factor in this story. And I think it can be found in Genesis 3:16-19:

> Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.
>
> And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;
>
> Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field:
>
> In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken. . . .

The supposition here is that man had to produce his own food and that this would be done by arduous toil, for if he were destined to carry out the original first command, "Be fruitful and multiply," he would have to be a provider of the necessaries of existence, namely food, fuel, clothing and shelter. In this respect we might have another look at some of the illustrations of paintings by great medieval artists. I can think of several to be seen in the famous galleries. The Altpinakothek at Munich, the wonderful exhibition on the Ringstrasse in Vienna, in the Louvre at Paris, and other places where Adam and Eve are depicted wearing fig leaves, and in one, illustrating the expulsion from the Garden, wearing a trailing vine of grape leaves. They were then conscious of their nakedness. Hence, the loin cloth or skin to hide their genitals.

If we assume the Maker of Adam and Eve was conscious of the tendencies of his workmanship, He must have realized that they would have to fend for themselves in every particular that existence called for.

We are apt to forget, in reading the biblical stories, the time and conditions under which authors and editors labored when these were spoken or written. They were living under the biblical curse—earning their bread by the sweat of their brow. One of the oldest myths that lingered in the memory of man was that of a paradise in which no labor was done and man enjoyed the fruits of the earth. Dr. Kramer tells us of it in his book on Sumer.[2] Hesiod describes it. The Isles of the Blest, referred to by Herodotus, were pictured in man's mind as the ideal paradise, the utopia par excellence. Perhaps our biblical authors gathered, from the description of Eden before the evil fruit was eaten, that the Creator's first intention was to produce beings who would not have to labor.

There is another lesson to be learned from the original sin idea, and it is the helplessness of the couple when they were thrust from the Garden. No tool, no packet of seeds, clotheless, foodless, and not even a weapon to defend themselves from ferocious, hungry beasts. Surely man when he left the Garden was man at the beginning of it all. Labor is the curse. But man is endowed with faculties not only for lightening his toil but to lift the curse from his brow. Call it curse if you will, but what else was there for man to do? In all probability we have been led astray on this matter, and accepted too readily the idea that man was not only to suffer for his pains, but all generations should eat their bread in sorrow. Such a terrible idea does not betoken a beneficent Creator who has provided every essential thing for man's needs.

The story of the forbidden fruit was something of a stumbling block to the intelligent Bible reader who was acquainted with the pamphlet-literature of many of the rationalists. He wondered why the first couple were put to the test, for without reason they could not fend for themselves, even in the Garden of Eden. Dr. Edward Robertson, the eminent Semitic scholar, now librarian of the John Rylands Library, suggests that these stories in

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[2] *From the Tablets of Sumer*, Indian Hills, Colorado, The Falcon's Wing Press, 1956.

Genesis should not be taken literally. He says they are in the nature of allegories, and I agree with him. There is a hidden meaning in each.

The first sin that was committed was one of theft. Eve did not obey the command. She stole a forbidden fruit, ate some of it, and gave the rest to Adam. It was certainly wrong to disobey the command; to do so, theft had to be committed. Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that the intelligent Bible reader imagined that the meaning of the story was no more than the breaking of the law by stealing forbidden fruit. Thus, the old theory of original sin could not be maintained.

If we are to treat these stories as parables, that is, examples of hidden truths, there is no reason why the God who made Adam should not have pronounced an edict against murder. He must have known that Eve would take the fruit and that she and Adam would eat it. For we cannot deny to Him a prescience which would cover the actions of His creatures. But murder was not forbidden.

I realize it is almost impossible now to make the reader understand the difficulty of the problems the intelligent student of sixty years ago had to meet in controversy. Under the Mosaic Law, "Thou shalt not kill" and "Thou shalt not steal" were both contained in the Decalogue.

When Cain killed Abel, the long story of shedding blood began and the cause of it was about the value of the products the two brothers produced. And Cain was cursed for killing his brother and became a vagabond and built the first city. "And Abel was a keeper of sheep [the first shepherd], but Cain was a tiller of the ground" (Gen. 4:2).

I have not found a scholar who has asked why Yahweh should frown upon an agriculturist and smile upon a shepherd. The fruits of the field offered by Cain were despised, and the lamb offered by Abel was accepted with gratitude. Are we to infer from this story that it is merely put in to carry out the penalties of the curse that the descendants of Cain were to eat their bread in the sweat of their brow? It seems to be dragged in for that purpose and that purpose only. No one who knows anything at all about food would imagine that a shepherd lived day in and day out upon mutton. If it was intended that the race should be meat-eaters and never indulge in the cereals and plants of the field, men would have no other occupation than that of nomads, moving from pasture to pasture. This derogatory view of the occupation of the husbandman is in flat contradiction to what follows in several of the stories before the tribes of Israel settled in Canaan.

Joseph was a member of the tribe honored by Yahweh, but in Egypt he went into the corn business. And when the captives were hungry in the desert and cried for food, Yahweh did not send them lamb or mutton; they were nourished by quail and, as one of the Bible verses tells us, manna. Whatever it was, it was no product of a shepherd.

But it is stranger still to make sense of it when we come to the settlement in Canaan. There is no order after the land is apportioned to the twelve tribes, to take up sheep-raising and abjure any inclination to cultivate the land. How the several fruits of the trees mentioned were to be tended and harvested, crops grown and threshed, meal ground and baked into bread are mysteries that shepherds may understand, but no tiller of the soil can solve.

Perhaps the reason why shepherds were exempt is that the editor who put these stories together wished to prepare the way for Abraham and Jacob. For we learn next to nothing about their having to toil upon the land. They were cattle raisers, and when Abraham divided that part of Canaan between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Coast with Lot, we learn of differences of opinion concerning pasture lands for sheep. Moreover, later when the drought forced Jacob to go south, it was in search of pasture for his hungry cattle, sheep and goats.

The reader might, for the moment, accept the story of the making of man, as it is told in Genesis, literally because it is essential in examining it to realize that the author who invented it imagined the Garden of Eden was then the world. The extent of the land that was afterwards granted to Adam and his progeny runs from Ethiopia to the Euphrates. This is an afterthought, inserted probably to anticipate the Abraham story, for Ur is given to us as his place of origin, and recent investigations in Sumer have led some of the archaeologists to suppose that the Garden of Eden was near the mouth of the river. We might ask if the lands beyond the Garden, mentioned in the grant, had not been peopled. Someone must have explored these far-off places. It is recorded that in the land of Havilah there is gold as well as "bdellium and the onyx stone" (Gen. 2:11-12).

The devout Bible reader might think that the above views are unnecessarily critical of the Garden story, but I can assure him the questionings that come to my mind do not exceed those of Bible scholars. Indeed, the more I read of works published today which deal with the early chapters of the Old Testament, the more convinced I become that the great percentage of Bible readers prefer to remain in ignorance of what is now written. As an instance of this, I told a friend he ought to read a work by the Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Barnes, on the New Testament, a subject we were discussing at the time. He was amazed to hear that a high dignitary of the church should criticize the Gospel as it is set down in Matthew and Mark.

I wonder what a Bible student would think of a work that has just been published, called *Cain: Son of the Serpent*.[3] The author is David Max Eichhorn, who was made a Rabbi in 1931 by the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, earned the Doctor of Divinity degree in 1938 and the honorary degree of Doctor of Hebrew Letters in 1956. He is at present Chairman of the Committee on the Unaffiliated of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and is well known as a conductor of spiritual retreats for chaplains and preaching missions for Jewish service personnel.

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[3] New York, Whittier Books, Inc., 1957.

The rabbi's interpretation of the Garden story is the most astonishing one that has been written. Every idea Christian writers have expressed upon this is utterly demolished. The learned Hebrew divine gives quite a new meaning to the notion so long held of original sin, and I can assure the reader that his ideas are startling and shocking.

It is astonishing to me to find that so many people still cling to the old mythologies, as if the Book depended upon them for its worth. The Bible is not a mere collection of myths, folklore and what were called "scrappy bits of history." It contains the most perfect code of laws, spiritual and ethical, that was ever given to men, or ever will be given. Who would gainsay this? No one so far, outside atheistic coteries, has ever challenged the completeness of it. There is nothing to add, and the more one looks into it, the surer one becomes that everything fits. It has been called a perfect philosophy of life.

Torah is the Law for the Hebrew, and this is quite independent of the myths and the folklore stories.

The myths of Adam and Eve, as they are set out in Genesis, are full of contradictory ideas. There are two different versions of these stories, which conflict in the strangest way. In chapter 1:27 we read: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

If the plural in this verse refers to mankind, it makes sense; but if it refers to man and woman, it anticipates the making of Eve. The next verse complicates the matter. It reads: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28).

The command to "be fruitful and multiply" is given before the Garden is made for Adam, and before a wife is given to him. Moreover, in this order to the first man there is an important one that is overlooked by scholars, and that is concerned with his vocation. He is told to "replenish the earth, and subdue it." Now this cannot refer to shepherds. To subdue the earth really means the land must be tilled and that is the work of a farmer. So the first injunction which points directly to the employment of Adam is one his Maker later on despises.

The further we go into these contradictory ideas, the more intricate the business becomes of discovering the reason for flouting the obvious lacunae in the story.

In the second chapter we have another version of the making of man, and this appears after the work in the first chapter of his appearance was finished (Gen. 2:7).

Then a garden was made, and trees were made to grow (2:9). May we consider that this garden was an enclosure, especially made for one man?

For although the reader may imagine that in the first chapter a mate was created for him, he cannot overlook the implication contained in this verse that Adam had no mate when the garden was made. It is not until later the Maker of Adam considered that "it is not good that the man should be alone" (2:18). So he puts Adam to sleep and takes a rib from him (2:21-22), and fashions it into a woman.

But before she is made to be a mate for the first man, their Maker warns Adam of a tree in the garden, whose fruit must not be eaten (2:17). This is "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

It should be remembered here that Eve had not been made when the Maker of the garden warned Adam to eat no fruit of the tree of knowledge. Yet, at the beginning of chapter 3, she tells the serpent: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (3:3).

Here begins the story of original sin, which has been told over and over again in so many ways by the different denominations. Yet, there are implications that have been overlooked. We are told that Adam and Eve were naked and not ashamed (2:25). Did the fruit they ate make them conscious of their nude bodies, for if we are to accept that notion, we cannot help but wonder how they were to be fruitful and multiply unless they began to breed. How could they replenish the earth if they remained in a state of blissful ignorance of their sex relationship? Were they born without instinct of satisfying their natural desire? It is hard to make top or tail of this story.

When one thinks of the distracted searchings of heart and mind that have been caused to millions by the biblical idea of original sin, one might be justified in forming the opinion that it is not wise to take these stories literally.

Now let us look a little more closely into the story of Cain and Abel, for we shall have to consider it later on in connection with other matters. There are so many different interpretations of this fable coming from Christian and Hebrew sources that in itself it is worth a book. Rabbi Eichhorn, in his work, *Cain: Son of the Serpent*, tells us that an old myth has it that the serpent was the father of Cain, that the first tempter subdued Eve, and perhaps that is the reason why he has been named the first scapegoat.

A quite different interpretation is to be found in the article on Cain in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*. It is written by The Reverend T. K. Cheyne, one of the editors of the encyclopaedia. The whole of it is worth reading, but there is space here only to quote a few sentences of comment, which indicate the thoroughness of the author's inquiry. He says:

> . . . The name evidently comes from an early, though not a genuine Hebrew, tradition. . . . Its natural meanings are "smith," "artificer" . . . The more general sense "artificer" suits best for Cain the city-builder, and the more special one "smith" for the second part of the

> compound name Tubal-cain. Both these names are attached to heroes who at the outset of the tradition must have possessed a divine character. . . .
>
> Can we avoid regarding this [artificer] as the translation of a title of the divine demiurge, borrowed from Babylonia through the medium of the Canaanites? . . .
>
> Tubal-cain is described in Gen. 4:22 as "the father of all those who work in bronze and iron. . . ."[4]

This information is instructive for several reasons, because it points directly to the vocation of Cain after he was expelled from the Garden for slaying his brother. He then turned his hand to building cities, according to the legend in Genesis (4:17). But long before Joshua entered the Promised Land, there were cities on the Euphrates and the Tigris and in what we call Palestine. Kathleen Kenyon, in her book, *Digging up Jericho*,[5] suggests the age of the city may be carried back some eight or ten thousand years. And her statement is corroborated by Dr. Y. Yadin, the Hebrew archaeologist. So we may think the building of Enoch by Cain was not the first city to be constructed.

Strange to relate, this change of vocation by the first murderer leaves us without a farmer to "replenish" and "subdue" the earth. Henceforth, there are to be shepherds and city raisers. And so contradiction follows contradiction, and the anthropologist is left without some of the most important evidence upon which he bases his knowledge of the age of skulls and bones.

One curious suggestion is made by scholars, which relates to the discovery by Moses of Yahweh, who was the Kenite god, and who was worshiped by his father-in-law, Jethro. This deals with the stem from which the Kenites derived. Cain seems, in this story, to be the progenitor of this people. The *Encyclopaedia Biblica* informs us:

> . . . Nothing but a curse seemed to explain this inveterate repugnance to city life, and a curse implied guilt; while the unbridled vindictiveness of the nomads was explicable only by a compassionate command of Yahwe, who after all was the God of the Kenites as well as of the Israelites. . . .[6]

How hard it is to reconcile many of the different versions of the early myths in Genesis. Some of them lead to peculiar interpretations. It is useless to look for consistency in these stories. After what we have read about Cain, the builder of cities, we are amazed to find that after the settlement of the tribes in the Promised Land, the cities had been given to the Levites. Perhaps by that time, Yahweh had lifted the curse so that the priestly class would have no compunction in taking up their residence in places that had been upon the black list.

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[4] *Op. cit.*, V. I, pp. 620, 623, 626-27.

[5] London, Ernest Benn, 1957.

[6] *Loc. cit.*, V. I, p. 621.

These are not new questions that have arisen during the past two generations. Many of them were discussed by the rationalists in the days of Huxley and Tyndall. What were then regarded as sheer legends are now of interest of more moment than they were in Lecky's day.

Moreover, it should be clear to the reader that we are discussing the marvels of a tribal god, not those of the Creator God, the Founder and Ruler of the universe, spelled with a capital "G." And why are the acts of other tribal gods submitted to close examination and Yahweh's held sacrosanct? Think of what we know of other gods, and what they did to man. Who, knowing *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles, can forget the cruel whim of Phoebus? Who can overlook the terrible sacrifice that had to be made by Agamemnon in slaying his daughter Iphigenia to appease Artemis? Nay, further, think of one of the last scenes in the *Iliad* when Zeus roared with laughter at his fighting progeny, and Athene hurled a landmark at Ares and sent him sprawling into the dust.

Let us not forget that man is the legend-maker. His desire for marvels is insatiable, and it lies at the root of all scientific inquiry. Indeed, our early literature is permeated through and through with stories of horror side by side with beautiful poems that elevate our minds. But the curse inflicted upon Adam, although we now know it was not original as stated in Genesis, has been at the root of so much misunderstanding regarding what was called original sin. And the reason for the severity of the sentence is not clearly explained. This matter has balked and harassed many a man who has gone conscientiously to work to read the Pentateuch and then has been obliged to cast it aside as a meaningless "myth."

Think of the controversies that have raged since the days of Wyclif about the stories told in Genesis and Exodus. Lecky in his work, *Rationalism in Europe*, calls to mind a book that was written in the seventeenth century by La Peyrère, a French Protestant. Lecky says:

> . . . The author . . . had been struck by some difficulties connected with the ordinary doctrine of Original Sin, and by some points in which science seemed to clash with the assertions of the Old Testament; and he endeavoured to meet them by altogether isolating the Biblical history from the general current of human affairs. Adam, he maintained, was not the father of the human race, but simply the progenitor of the Jews, and the whole antediluvian history is only that of a single people.

The author of this book, after its publication, became a Roman Catholic and recanted his opinions.

I cannot think of a Bible story in the Pentateuch that has not been sub-

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[7] *Op. cit.*, New York and London, D. Appleton, 1910, 2 vols., V. I, pp. 300-01.

mitted to close examination. It is on record that some have asked how Abel became a shepherd; others have desired to know where Cain found the weapon to slay his brother. Was it a knife or a club? This is important because we do not think that a husbandman used a metal tool at that early date.

It cannot be said that the authors of the new versions have done much to help us in solving these problems. Since the days of Goodspeed, we have had the translations of Knox, Moffatt and others. To what extent they are read by Bible students in theological seminaries I do not know. But from a literary point of view, I turn to the King James version or the Douay, and desire no other. To my mind the Pentateuch contains matter of superlative value for the conduct of the life of man. In the heated controversies, the legends unfortunately have taken precedence in general interest and have, as it were, hidden the jewels of a philosophy of the divine law of justice and an order of spiritual intercourse with the Creator. All this is to be found in the Pentateuch. Indeed, Deuteronomy is a perfect exposition of the operation of economic law, and it is prophetic of the consequences that will befall man if he violates it.

Now in this quest we shall pursue the conception of justice as it is laid down in Deuteronomy, and attempt to follow it through the ages described by the chroniclers, the great prophets, the minor prophets until we reach Nazareth.

The key word which unlocks the gates of the domain of enlightenment is no other than justice. I admit it is very difficult to reconcile this with the actions of the Israelites in taking possession of Canaan. Yet, it is possible to keep it clear of confusions that may arise when it seems contrary to the havoc caused by conquest. Here we find other people have no rights whatever. Only the followers of Moses are under divine care. Yahweh admits he is a jealous god; he is vindictive, unforgiving and cruel. His commands are sometimes so brutal that we lose all respect for his statements. There are anomalies in Deuteronomy that shock us. Still, as we think these problems out, they do not obliterate from our mind the sense of a philosophy that was to engage the thought of many of the world's deepest thinkers. This word justice in the sense that it is used in the Old Testament gave rise to Plato's *Republic*. Aristotle dealt with it, so did Cicero. Augustine of Hippo thought deeply of it. It stands firmly at the basis of the eternal law, made evident to man in that which was created, for the use of all. Consider, therefore, some of the passages in which it is set forth:

> He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he (Deut. 32:4).

The word "rock" is well chosen. It is the immovable basis of divine law from the beginning. Here is another passage, from Douay:

> If there be a controversy between men, and they call upon the judges: they shall give the prize of justice to him whom they perceive to be just: and him whom they find to be wicked, they shall condemn of wickedness (Deut. 25:1).

Later on I shall explain why I quote the Douay version in preference to the King James. Here is another one from the Douay:

> Thou shalt appoint judges and magistrates in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God shall give thee, in all thy tribes: that they may judge the people with just judgment,
>
> And not go aside to either part. Thou shalt not accept person nor gifts: for gifts blind the eyes of the wise, and change the words of the just.
>
> Thou shalt follow justly after that which is just: that thou mayest live and possess the land, which the Lord thy God shall give thee (Deut. 16:18, 19, 20).

They looked forward to a time when

> And there shall be no poor nor beggar among you: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in the land which he will give thee in possession (Deut. 15:4, Douay).

But until that day:

> There will not be wanting poor in the land of thy habitation: therefore I command thee to open thy hand to thy needy and poor brother, that liveth in the land (Deut. 15:11, Douay).

The duty of the parents in training their children was not overlooked. It was not only incumbent upon the priests to perform this office. It was a command that fell to the lot of a father. It says:

> Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength.
>
> And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart:
>
> And thou shalt tell them to thy children (Deut. 6:5, 6, 7, Douay). . . .

The stranger was not forgotten. He was to live under the same law as the Israelite:

> And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him (Deut. 1:16).

It is sometimes overlooked by Bible scholars that it is definitely stated that the land is the Creator's. It is given to man to use, not to own and hire another to use it while he collects rent. Here is the passage:

> Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is (Deut. 10:14).

Then to make certain that the lots when they are distributed to the members of the tribes shall be protected from trespass or theft, we have what I call the "eleventh" commandment:

> Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it (Deut. 19:14).

This is a law for land users that may be found in all the old civilizations. There are records of it in Egypt, Babylon, Greece and Rome, and the violation of it marked the beginning of the end of all the great empires of the past. Pliny says, "Great estates ruined Italy." The words of Socrates in *The Republic* are applicable to the nations of our day.

Now the word "possession," as it is used in the biblical law of justice does not mean ownership. It refers to *possession for use*. "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark" (Deut. 27:17). Indeed, many of the Early Fathers condemned the ownership of land—what in the nineteenth century was called landlordism.

We might well ask if it is possible to understand the principal thread of reasoning that runs through the Old Testament unless the economic basis for justice is kept in mind. It has been well said that the Bible gives us a perfect history of the land question. This may seem to the reader to be merely a secular remark or one of a sheer materialist. But it is not so. To begin with Abraham, and follow the progeny of Jacob into Goshen, then the long trek of the captives led by Moses to Sinai, and then follow the battles of Joshua until peace is brought about and the tribes are settled, the story of the land problem is of paramount economic and ethical interest. Indeed, the story of Israel is an exposition of the violation of the fundamental economic law. The tribes violated every condition they had promised to obey. Disobedience was their undoing, and it may be said that all the peoples before them and all those that came after them suffered from the same sin. The history of this problem is extant, and here I shall give examples of the importance of the law of respecting a neighbor's landmark, as we find them in the records of old civilizations.

CHAPTER II

COMMENTARY ON GENESIS

It is a laborious business searching the works of eminent scholars and encyclopaedias for enlightenment upon the meaning of the Garden story. Last night my secretary went through a dozen or more books looking for an explanation of it that would be of interest to the working-man Bible student. She found nothing. It is amazing to me that the scholars are silent upon this matter, for one has only to read it as it is given in the King James version to gather from it a simple story of how man is to provide for himself. Surely we cannot ignore the idea that Adam is a gardener; Eve, a spinner and weaver; Abel, a cattle-raiser and a shepherd; and Cain, a farmer and builder. Here we have the four categories of indispensable products man must raise for his physical well-being. The essentials are food, fuel, clothing and shelter.

Of what use to the earnest Bible reader are the profound essays upon the sources of these stories and the complicated explanations of the meaning of such terms as Yahweh, Elohim, Adonai and Jehovah?

Philo, the famous Hebrew philosopher who lived and worked in Alexandria, was born in the year 20 B.C., and lived for about seventy years. In referring to the Eden story, he warned against taking it literally, and since his time other Hebrew scholars have regarded it as folklore. Most of our renowned Bible experts accept it as allegory, but I have found in none of their books an attempt to transmute it into rational terms, that is, to give it a meaning which cannot be dissociated in any way from what took place in the Garden.

It is quite in order that we should draw on our imagination in these matters, as the early Christian interpreters did. When one understands the extraordinary variations of translations of the original Hebrew texts, which were used for the making of the first Greek Bible, it is justifiable to inquire, as the scholars do, into the sensible meaning of the verses by comparing translation with translation, and then submitting what is found to careful analysis. There is no harm in doing this. It was done by Jerome, the greatest scholar of his day, when he gave to the world the Latin version, which is the basis of the Douay, published in 1609.

What we seek in these early chapters is the inner meaning of such stories. The day is gone when the unenlightened theologian of the hard and fast type (sometimes called a Fundamentalist) can put up a sign which reads, "No trespassing here." Surely a cultured man will admit that the world has been enriched by those who have worked upon the Greek myths and found their inner meanings.

We owe a great debt to the higher critics of sixty and seventy years ago, who, against a world of prejudice, brought reason into the field of interpretation and cleared away many absurd misunderstandings of the text.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the original texts were for the Hebrew. When they were collated and edited, no one dreamed of such a religious body as the Christians. Yet, in all the controversies that have taken place, it is Christian interpretation of these Hebrew memorials that has caused so much misunderstanding and shaken the belief of tens of thousands in so many Christian denominations.

It must be observed, however, that there is little or no controversy today; at least, I do not meet with it. What I do notice, over and over again, in talking to my friends is a lack of interest in the Bible and the works of our renowned scholars who have done so much to restore it to its place in Christian culture.

I can refer to an incident that took place last year. I was talking to a young lady who had been schooled at an institution of high repute, and I was shocked when she asked me, ''What can the Bible do for me? Nothing!''

If her question and reply are a sample of the thought of young women of today, I suggest it is time to start a Bible crusade and interpret it afresh to old and young. In thinking this over, I felt certain that no girl of similar schooling, when I was a young man, would have dared to say such a thing. I feel sure her parents would have been horrified on hearing such an expression.

I hold that the Bible was not intended to be a special preserve for learned men. As it was for the people of Israel, so the Christian versions were intended to be read by the commonalty; and that this was so is proved conclusively by the fact that its phrases and some of its poems entered into the speech of ordinary men and women of the nineteenth century. Therefore, my desire to learn from it the ways and means of offering to the people of today a spiritual guide, a code of morals, and a just system of satisfying the physical needs of man.

There is no other work that covers these essentials of life. The people of no nation yet have produced one that compares with it as a history of economic wrong destroying the spirit and turning the impoverished from God. Aristotle said, ''Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime.''

The great controversies which sometimes raged fiercely before the beginning of this century may now be considered without acrimony, for the scholars, the archaeologists, the genealogists and the anthropologists have made it simple for us to regard the myths, folklore, and miracles with a newer understanding, which in no way detracts from the spiritual worth of the Bible. As we proceed, we hope to show its teachings were never so much wanted as they are today, and that if the turmoil of the world is to be overcome and men shall decide to live in harmony with one another, the Bible is the only work that tells us how this may be done.

The Bible begins with a description of the work of the Creator—God with a capital "G." "Let there be light!" In answer to this command, the sun shines and as its rays spread, chaos vanishes and land and sea appear. Then follows the creation of the brute, the reptile, the bird, insects, and fish. In this we are impressed with the idea that it is done for a definite purpose. And we ask ourselves who or what is to use these natural gifts. It is easy for us to decide, if we know the first thing about nature and growth, that in the above classification provision is made for all the creatures that have been created.

We read on, and in the second or third chapter we find the answer to our question. Nature's table is spread for man, and once we have understood this fact, the definite purpose of creation becomes clear to us. Man is "lord of the fowl and the brute." The earth is his to use for his well-being and to be passed down to all generations as the sacred gift of the Creator. This poem placed at the beginning of Genesis is constructed with a logic of sequence that denotes a very late period of authorship. Many scientists have analyzed its construction and written about its scientific trend of thought.

Some of the scholars who have written upon the creation poem have overlooked the first order given and that was, "Be fruitful and multiply." It is important to keep this in mind because we shall find, when we reach the making of Adam and Eve, there is a serious contradiction in the way this order is used there. We take it that, if all the creatures before Adam were ordered to "Be fruitful and multiply," they were endowed with the instinct to propagate. They must increase *abundantly*, and the term is stressed several times as it applies to each class.

Sénancour, in his penetrating studies of man, states: "The preservation of the species is the first law of nature." This is not in accordance with the narrow notions of former theologians who would have had us believe that flesh and blood are not quite fit subjects for Holy Writ. But these people exist no longer as a body whose opinions sway the faithful.

This introduction to the creation poem will serve to clarify our understanding of man's relationship to the universe and substantiate the idea that he is the terrestrial lord of the great design. It is his habitation, and in it he finds everything that is essential for his desires and needs. He should realize that he has been richly provided for by a beneficent All-Father, world without end. In this we may appreciate the old saying, "Land is perpetual man."

There are many passages in the early chapters of Genesis that reveal a confusion of ideas, which Bible readers of nearly all the Christian denominations have treated rather lightly. But entirely apart from the myth itself, as we read it, it is expressed in terms that have not been carefully chosen by the translators of the King James and Douay versions. As we shall meet these terms frequently as we pursue our purpose, it may be just as well here to deal with them, so that we may appreciate their significance as we meet them in other books. The first two chapters in the Septuagint version (translation) differ in wording from the two mentioned above.[1] Let us look at the verses about the making of man. They read as follows:

> And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . .
> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them (Gen. 1:26-27).

In the first verse quoted above, man is to be "made," but in the other verse, he is to be "created." If we are to be clear about the act, we must decide that he was either made or created. He could not be made and created.

When, later, we come to the process of making him, we find that the god used his hands. It was a manual act. The god took a lump of clay and shaped it. But creative work requires no manipulation. It is purely a mental process—idea taking form. Making is shaping.

It is often overlooked, when this incident is discussed, that Adam was shaped as an adult. He was not born of woman and had no babyhood, no youth. He was a mature man physically when he came from the hands of the god. Furthermore, Eve was not created. A rib was taken from Adam while he was sleeping, and from it Eve was made. She too was produced, not created.

Now this may seem to be a business of splitting hairs or, as a wit of the last century said, "shaving toothpicks." But anyone who thinks so cannot be familiar with the bewildering state of mind of our modern economists, as it is presented to us in the ponderous books they write. Many of them are all at sea about the precise meaning of these terms. How often we come across the words "the creation of wealth" and the other, "the creation of capital." If we do not define our terms clearly at the outset of this work, we shall wander into labyrinths of confusion, for the Bible is the finest compendium of economic woe that has ever been put together. And the woe is the undoing of Israel.

When we use the term "create," the reader must know that it does not mean produce or make. Whether creation was or was not a purely mental act or, as Sir James Jeans said, "a thought," we do know that man, the producer, cannot create a grain of sand; that his power is strictly limited to the use of the already made, or to be precise, created. I use the term "made" there because it was one of Henri Bergson's favorite expressions. This is just an example of how easy it is to slip into contradictory meanings. Perhaps the reason why the early chapters of Genesis have been slighted by so many scholars is that for a long time theologians considered it dangerous to dilate upon them, fearing it would promote controversy, which was to be avoided under all circumstances. Whether this were wise or not, the attitude of the theologians did not escape severe criticism from the rationalists.

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[1] Professor Edward Robertson explains: "The Revised Version follows the Hebrew, which uses two words in the first chapter *bara* and *'asah*. *Bara* is only used of God creating; *'asah*, on the other hand, is used for 'doing' or 'making' by God or man. The Greek (Septuagint) uses only *one* verb for every case. Where, then, the R. V. has 'created' it interprets correctly the Hebrew *bara;* where it has 'made' the verb used is *'asah*."

Blessed are the truly devout, for they escape the pitfalls of controversy. I realize that the pious are invulnerable to the barbs of criticism, and at the same time I am conscious that many Bible readers of today may smile tolerantly at what I have written about the difference between creating and producing. But I have to look far ahead and think of the destination of this work. The journey extends to Nazareth, and when we reach there, we shall find there was one who had precise ideas about what is created and what is made. We shall find, towards the end, that he realized that justice, the purpose of his mission, was firmly founded in creation, and that the two are inseparable. Let this be my excuse for dealing with the scene in the Garden.

CHAPTER III

THE STORY OF NOAH

The story of Noah before and after the Flood is replete with problems that would have baffled the wit of an Oedipus. There are gaps in it so wide that one cannot help but think that it had lost much of its detail by the time the compilers in the eighth century before the Christian era set to work to edit the folklore passed down generation after generation, but not transscribed. Some scholars attribute the omissions to the forgetfulness of those tribes that were so often on the move or suffered great losses in wars. Yet, we know from the discoveries in very old cities of the Euphrates and the Tigris that events were recorded as far back as 2,400 years before the Christian era. The Code of Hammurabi is only one of the existing records of ages long past. The Sumerian tablets carry us back to times earlier still.

The riddle put to the Sphinx by Oedipus was comparatively simple as compared with those we ponder concerning Noah and his sons after the waters subsided and they left the ark. Here the language question arises, for we may presume, according to Genesis 11:1, that the Noah family spoke one tongue.

When Noah left the ark, he had three sons and their wives, but there is no mention of daughters. Shem, Ham and Japheth were bidden to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 9:1), and they obeyed the command. But we are not told where their sons found their wives, to produce the long genealogical line accounted for in Chapter 10. The first verse reads: "Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the Flood."

It is not mentioned whether they and their successors produced any daughters. Genealogical trees often bear branches the trunk would not father. Can it be that after the incident of the birth of Cain and Abel, the compilers were somewhat disturbed at the inference to be drawn that brothers and sisters wed? This is a mystery that has never been cleared up. It remains in the dark with that of the strange case of Cain's wife. Many of the theologians have striven to explain away these difficult problems which have perplexed sorely the minds of Bible students. There could have been no "land of Nod, on the east of Eden" for the grandsons of Noah as there was for Cain.

There is no more fascinating work in studying the great literature of the world than is to be found in the Book of Genesis, because it teems with the most interesting questions of an order that the student feels must be elucidated. One wonders if there were hidden reasons for the omissions. After nearly three thousand years of recording Bible stories, the work of the serious research Bible scholar becomes more and more complicated. The discoveries since the finding of the Rosetta Stone, the Code of Hammurabi, the Sumerian tablets, to say nothing of such finds as the Dead Sea Scrolls, have riveted the attention of the most distinguished men of this century, and from them has come an avalanche of works on many different subjects: personages, places, chronology, language.

Who can now keep pace with the discoveries and announcements of scientists in many branches of learning, and how are we to prepare our minds for the changes our thought and knowledge must undergo? So remarkable are they that those of us who were reared on the Bible sixty or seventy years ago are stunned at their implications. Geologists have set the age of the earth back billions of years. Archaeologists have uncovered the remains of civilizations that flourished before the days of Noah. Physicists have found the secret—the hidden—things that were the Lord's, and used them for weapons of destruction. In other branches of learning scholars have deciphered the tablets that record mythological dynasties of the fifth and sixth millennia. The cuneiform writing is now as easily read by the experts as English letters, so we are informed by Dr. S. N. Kramer. All these persistent changes have come since Champollion discovered the Rosetta Stone, which enabled us to read Egyptian hieroglyphics.

What this means to the student of the Bible can scarcely be determined, for these are affairs that appeal to the intellect of man. I do not find one that can satisfy the hunger of his soul. Yet, the word of God remains unshaken, and the Bible (so it appears to me) as a groundwork for spiritual education is as precious as ever it was. What we owe to it is beyond the power of the scholar to tell. All that is included in the term of Christian culture has been inspired by it. Whatever science there was during the Dark Ages down to the time of Roger Bacon came from the east. Music and the arts, prose and verse, law and medicine are only some of the rich endowments that have fallen to man and ennobled him, despite the vicissitudes of conquest and subjection.

What the Bible was to men, the Bible is today, and we do it no violence by permitting the intellect to examine the changes of idea wrought by science. This is a duty incumbent upon the scholar, and it will enable him to meet the present trend of skeptical inquiry as to the validity of the stories that bear an historic color.

To take a long look backwards, prompted by the narratives concerning the dispersal of the sons of Noah, is necessary if we are ready to appreciate the mission of Abraham. Perhaps by following his footsteps when he left Ur, we might reach Galilee with him, the land of Jesus, the one man who divined the will of the Creator. Hence, the quest to learn why Galilee was a place apart and why it differed in so many strange ways from the other parts of what we call Palestine.

As it is marked on the oldest maps I have found, it lies like a broad trench, or rather a wide, deep moat stretching between the southern line of Syria and the northern one of Samaria. To the east, Jordan and the lake; to the west, the Mediterranean. There are few references in the Old Testament to this land, which is strange, for if Abraham went to Damascus, he must have passed across Galilee when he went south to Shechem and Bethel.

In another section I shall dwell on the wars of Joshua, but before I treat of them, I shall search diligently in the works of archaeologists and eminent Bible scholars for all the information I can gather concerning Hittite and Egyptian wars that ravaged Syria and Canaan before Moses crossed the Red Sea with the captives. It is almost impossible to treat this examination in a chronological manner which would satisfy the historical purist, for there are not only long periods unrecorded, but there are strange omissions in the narratives. Notwithstanding the great ages of the earliest patriarchs, we shall find some periods treated scantily. Time for the age of man seems to have meant much to the recorders, but time for periods, in many cases, did not concern them much.

For our purpose, the books of Professor John Garstang are informative. His work as an archaeologist took him to Egypt, to Jericho, to Galilee, and finally to Turkey at Mersin. His book, *The Hittite Empire*, was accepted by Kemal Pasha as a genealogy of the Turks. The pioneer work done by Garstang at Jericho, and described in his volumes, must be read together with Kathleen Kenyon's book, *Digging up Jericho*. I can promise the student some thrilling hours if he will devote himself to this exercise. And he will learn much that will help him to follow the story of the conquest as we have it in the Book of Joshua.

While the student is at work gathering information from the books upon these subjects, the archaeologist is busy discovering new places where finds of remarkable interest have turned up. An instance of this came to me today. In a letter received from Dr. Oliver Gurney, I am told:

> . . . [In a] trial excavation at a small site called Hacilar near Burdur, in the "lake district" of Turkey, . . . J. Mellaart had located the find-spot of some extremely interesting painted pottery which some peasants had shown him. The site proved to be a village of the neolithic and chalcolithic periods and the pottery turned out to be even more interesting than had been expected, for it provided the long-sought link between the prehistoric cultures of Mersin and Hassuna on the one hand and Greece (Sesklo ware) on the other. The distinguished prehistorian Prof. F. Schachermeyr visited Mr. Mellaart during his work on the site and was most excited by the finds, which he regards as epoch-making. In addition to the pottery, which is in itself of exceptional interest, there are figures which, I understand, are also most important.[1]

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[1] Nov. 13, 1957.

This is news indeed, and coming soon after the wonderful excavations at Beycesultan, it serves to confirm a prophetic guess I made to John Garstang in 1955 in London. We were then discussing the articles that appeared in *The Times* from Seton Lloyd on his finds at Beycesultan, and I told Garstang that I should not be surprised to learn that here was a link to be put in the chain reaching to Troy and Mycenae. I mention this so that the reader may be aware of the rapidity with which old civilizations are being exposed, giving us an entirely new conception of that which borders upon the prehistoric.

The anthropologists and archaeologists are pointing the way to a revision of our notions fostered by the Bible teaching that was current two generations ago. We learn that the deluge described in Genesis was not the only one that took place in Mesopotamia, and we are now informed that Noah was not the first shipwright to build an ark.

A recent work upon Sumer reveals discoveries of states and personages earlier than those that are given to us in Genesis. This book[2] is written by Dr. Samuel Noah Kramer, the expert Sumerologist of the University of Pennsylvania. It is astonishing to read that the Sumerians did not speak a Semitic language and that the deciphered tablets yield the information that they were the first to put in writing the history of their period.

Dr. Kramer reveals to us the story of the first Noah, whose name was Ziusudra. It is similar in so many respects to the one told in Genesis that we might hastily conclude it is the same experience of disaster. Yet, two might have taken place, for the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, after persistent, torrential rains, overflow and inundate great areas. But both occurred for the same purpose: "to destroy the seed of mankind." Another startling revelation we gather from Dr. Kramer's work is that the Sumerians had their Garden of Eden and an Eve who was "the mother of all living."

Thousands of years before Ptolemy completed the library at Alexandria, the Sumerians were at work recording their poems, hymns, belles-lettres, lamentations, proverbs, fables, and essays. Dr. Kramer tells us:

> . . . It was in the land known in ancient days as Sumer, situated north of the Persian Gulf between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, that the oldest known political assembly was convened. And when did this "congress" meet? In the third millennium B.C.
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> . . . It consisted, not unlike our own congress, of two "houses": a "senate," or an assembly of elders; and a "lower house," or an assembly of arms-bearing male citizens.[3]

We find none of this in Genesis. Indeed, until the time of Abraham, we read only of unlettered people who may have been shepherds or nomads We know less about Noah before the Flood than we know of personages who existed one or two thousand years before him. How strange it is that the archaeologists expose the remains of great civilizations but find so little to add to the Bible stories.

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[2] *From the Tablets of Sumer*, Indian Hills, Colorado, The Falcon's Wing Press, 1956.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 26-7.

Our knowledge of what happened after the Flood, when Noah returned to his old home, is rich in detail and of vast importance to the student who will trace the road of Abraham's mission, which took him to the land that became the home of Canaan, the son of Ham.

It is not easy to keep pace with the archaeologists, for their discoveries come in such rapid succession that one is scarcely fitted into the Bible narratives before another requires attention. One has just come to light that bears directly upon the problems arising out of the journeys taken by Abraham and the exiled Canaan. It concerns Shur, its site and the neighborhood. This place is mentioned several times in Genesis and Exodus. The important passages are as follows:

(1) Abraham dwelt "between Kadesh and Shur" (Gen. 20:1).
(2) Hagar is found "by the fountain in the way to Shur" [i.e., between Kadesh and Bered] (Gen. 16:7).
(3) After leaving the Red Sea, the Israelites "went out into the desert of Shur" (Exod. 15:22).

It is now more than probable that Shur emerges from the mists of legend and appears to be a real place. An announcement in the *New York Herald Tribune* of April 1, 1958 tells us that the "Way of Shur" referred to in the Bible was actually a caravan route from Beersheba through the Negev and Sinai Deserts into Egypt. Dr. Nelson Glueck affirms that it was a trade artery in use at the time of Abraham.[4]

May we not now imagine that Canaan followed this road when he was deported from the Euphrates, and this new discovery makes us wonder why Abraham did not follow it rather than travel the thousand miles to Damascus.

There is an illuminating passage to be found in the chapter called "The Old Testament World," written by the Reverend Dr. Snaith, and included in *The Bible Today*. He states:

> It was the end of the Early Bronze Age. Rapid changes were about to take place everywhere in the Near East in the year 2000 B.C., one of those surges of human activity which from time to time take place over wide areas without any obvious discernible affinity: as though the old gods die and new gods spring to birth. Most of Mesopotamia was under the rule of the kings of Ur, traditionally the home of Abraham's earliest days. Egypt was for a while under the Theban kings of the XIth dynasty. Palestine was in general decay with a rapidly decreasing population, whilst east of Jordan the land was becoming almost depopulated.[5]

[4] *Rivers in the Desert, A History of the Negev*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1959.

[5] London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1955, p. 6.

This book of essays is very useful for the student who is looking for leads to works written by experts upon new discoveries about the cities of Mesopotamia. He will find in it essays upon Languages, Archaeology, Religions, Manuscripts, and other literary, musical and social affairs.

The flow of books from the press upon these subjects increases year after year, and one craves the leisure in this busy world to dip into them all. What a story it is! And how our thirst for knowledge of the backgrounds of Noah and Abraham is whetted by it. How far afield the archaeologists will take us in the next ten years cannot be imagined. While we wonder, spades are working in the lands of ancient civilizations, and Sumerologists and cuneiform experts in many of the leading universities are deciphering thousands of tablets. As they perform this work, spades are turning up thousands more to be deciphered.

CHAPTER IV

THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM

We have learned from the tablets of the Sumerians that we may now put to ourselves some pertinent questions about Noah's origin, where he dwelt, and the activities of himself and his family. We are not told where he was when he learned that the race was to be destroyed because of man's wickedness. He had come from a family of men who lived to a great age. Methuselah and Lamech were his progenitors. There is, however, a passage that gives us a clue to his occupation, for in Genesis 5:29 we are told: "This same [Noah] shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed."

May we infer from this that he was not a shepherd, but more likely a small farmer? The reason why he and his family were to be saved from the cataclysm is set down in plain terms:

> But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.
>
> . . . Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God (Gen. 6:8-9).

Where the command was given to him to prepare for the flood is a matter of conjecture. According to some of the experts, he dwelt on the right bank of the Euphrates somewhere near Ur. Others suggest other places in that region. Now our knowledge of a large area, reaching from the delta of this great river northeast as far as Susa and as far north as Nippur is amplified, broadened and deepened by revelations concerning the people of this area. According to modern scholars, the Sumerians considered that the people of Sumer were not Semites. Are we then to jettison all the notions that we had about the forefathers of Abraham? The latest information we gather from the recordings on the tablets does not mention, so far, any place where Semites were found. It is not until the Amorites[1] came from the west and overthrew the kings of the Elamites at a much later date, in the second millennium B.C., that we learn of them in that area.

It will be a strange reversal of notion about Noah and his stock if we have to accept the idea that he was a non-Semitic Sumerian. There is no way of learning what language he spoke. This aid to the understanding of the race of ancient people is denied to us, in his case.

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[1] Dr. Sidney Smith clarifies the meaning of "Amorites": "It can be used in two different senses: (1) Any man from Syria or from Palmyrene was an Amorite and in the earliest periods, i.e., in the third millennium, the texts speak of the god Amor, and describe his entry into Babylonia. (2) The use of 'Amorite' for the men who had names of a 'Canaanite' form has become common among scholars and can be legitimately used in the way 'British' is used for Anglo-Saxons."

One startling thought comes to us when we study the translations of the tablets, and it is that the Sumerians were polytheists. The tablets deciphered by Dr. Kramer reveal the names and the powers of their gods. Some of them are as follows: An (heaven); Ki (earth); Enlil (air-god); Sin or Nanna (moon-god); Utu (sun-god); Inanna (Venus-goddess); Enki (water-god); and Nidaba (the goddess of wisdom).

This is a perplexing matter, for we must infer from it that Yahweh was not the god of Noah, although the language form that we read in the Bible is the same in both cases. Which god of the theogony, mentioned above, advised Noah to build the ark? These are no idle questions, for they touch the race and the language problem, and we do not know what further revelations the readers of cuneiform will bring to light in the next few months.

Moreover, the scholars are at odds concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch. Many have been named—running from Moses to Ezra. Undoubtedly the first five books were compiled by Hebrews, but how they came into possession of the information, no one knows. However, it is safe to say that there is nothing strange in recording history as it comes down in folklore, and there is much in the early Books of the Old Testament that has been substantiated by archaeologists, such as names of personages, the approximate period of the dynasties of kings, and the places where they reigned. The names of two places which are mentioned in Genesis—Shechem and Bethel—are as well known as to precise locality as Memphis and Babylon.

But the instructions given to Noah and the reasons for wiping out the race of man are monotheistic. Some great scholars say there is no denying the fact that these chapters were written by Hebrew chroniclers. But the earliest date for the compilation of some parts of the Pentateuch has been put at the tenth or ninth century B.C. A long time had passed since Noah and his family had left the ark, and long were the journeys taken by the people of Mesopotamia and of the countries from the Black Sea to Memphis, due to war, pestilence and drought, before the campaigns of Joshua enabled him to settle the twelve tribes.

Yet, folklore has given us some remarkable clues to pre-history. I read a book recently by expert investigators, which dealt with twelve myths. In each case, it was reported, there was some substance for the tale.

Therefore, we should be cautious and weigh with great consideration each new revelation of the archaeologist. So far, their triumph has been of vast importance, not only to the scholars who take intellectual pride in establishing facts, but also to the theologians who, in the past, have been prone to ignore or discount their work. The matter of Noah's dwelling place, before and after he left the ark, will be settled in the course of time, as has happened in so many extraordinary cases during the past fifty years. We may yet find evidence in Mesopotamia of his existence, as we have found that of his predecessor who built the first ark.

If he were a non-Semitic Sumerian, he worshiped gods and had no knowledge of the Hebrew language. Indeed, it may be said that the problems that arise concerning the language of peoples is one of the most important Bible scholars can study. Some scholars believe that its difficulties encompass the understanding of all the most important stories in the Old and New Testaments, from Abraham to Moses, from the minor prophets to Jesus.

The compilation of the stories of Genesis is a late work. The thought and expression are Hebrew, but the frequent repetitions in the eleventh and twelfth chapters, for example, denote to one familiar with ancient literature (even in translation) that there were many collaborators engaged upon the work. They could not have met as a committee after the fashion of the Seventy. Indeed, the compilers drew from several sources, and maybe at different times and different places.

The description of Creation is certainly not Hebrew. It has the precision and semi-scientific method of late Babylonian inscriptions. The most striking feature of what is attributable to the Hebrews is the emotional fervor of stating not only incidents but conversations. There is a poetic glamor in which we find the heart throb and soul-yearning of a people thirsting for guidance and consolation. Dr. H. H. Rowley of Manchester University, in his book, *The Growth of the Old Testament*, gives a long list of the discrepancies to be found in Genesis. There are contradictions which cannot be resolved, and the omissions as to time and place are found in most of the narratives of Noah, his family, and Abraham.

The renowned scholars who have given us many valuable works upon the origin of the Bible are not yet in agreement as to the date when it was written in Hebrew. Dr. G. R. Driver of Magdalen College, Oxford, in his invaluable study on the Hebrew Language, to be found in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (14th edition) places its beginning from the ninth or tenth centuries B.C. He points out that a West-Semitic language (Canaanite) resembles Hebrew and was current in the Land of Canaan before the coming of the Hebrew. Also, Egyptian documents as early as the sixteenth century B.C. contain more than 1,200 Semitic words. The other groups that contributed to the Hebrew language were the Arameans and the Akkadians, which rendered it a mixed speech.[2]

From the time of Ussher down to the present day, the Bible scholars have been unable to determine a chronology of the personages and events dealt with in Genesis, which may be accepted as final. The differences of opinion are sometimes wide, and the archaeologists are discovering, year after year, evidence that gives at least approximate age of periods and dates of some of the more important events described in the Pentateuch.

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[2] *Loc. cit.*, Vol. XI, p. 353.

The question, "Who wrote it? is still an open one. It seems scarcely possible for Moses to have been the author. Here again, the language question arises to confound us. What tongue did he speak? And in what form were the five books written? They all bear evidence of the hand of many authors, and the contradictions may be attributed to the writer of one chapter, who was ignorant of what had been set down in another. Perhaps we shall never find a tenable solution to this amazing problem.

We now know more about the origin of the people called Hittite than we did fifty years ago. The work of John Garstang has widened the scope of investigation as to language, race and institutions. The recent astonishing discoveries by Professor Seton Lloyd, the archaeologist, at Beycesultan have brought to our notice a far earlier beginning of civilization than was imagined a generation ago. There is one matter about these people that seems to be conceded now by the specialists, and that is that they spoke an Indo-European tongue. Furthermore, their conquests ranged over an enormous area, extending in the east to the Euphrates and south down into Syria at Damascus. There is a map in C. W. Ceram's book, *The Secret of the Hittites*, which marks the southern boundary of their invasions short of the northern line of what we now call Galilee. Yet, there are references in the early books of the Old Testament (in Genesis and in Numbers) that give one the impression that they went still further south and met the Egyptians.

The archaeologists are responsible for the revolution of thought concerning the peoples mentioned in the Old Testament: who they were, what language they spoke, and the influence they had upon primitive tribes. A new world of speculation is open to the student.

In the article on the Hittites in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (14th edition), we read:

> [Dr. F.] Hrozný, in the course of his researches, succeeded in identifying most forms of the Hittite language. On the basis of the structure of the language thus established he built his thesis that Hittite is an Indo-European language. He got this idea at first when he established that Hittite has a present participle. . . . The idea of a relationship between Hittite and Indo-European languages soon took a stronger hold when, having established a complete paradigm of the Hittite participle . . . he discovered that almost all the case-endings have more or less precise counterparts in Indo-European languages. . . .[3]

Practically the same notions can be held about the Amorites. They are a people of singular interest to us in this study. Dr. F. M. T. Böhl writes:

> . . . Egyptian illustrations of the New Kingdom show the Palestinian

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[3] *Loc. cit.*, Vol. XI, p. 600.

> Amorites to have been a race much more like the northern Europeans than the Semites; long headed, with blue eyes, straight nose and thin lips.
>
> . . . The Amorites had settled in the west of Lebanon and in the mountainous parts of Canaan, and perhaps even ruled Egypt for a short time. It is, in fact, probable that the foreign domination of Egypt, the so-called Hyksos (*c.* 1800-1580 B.C.), is connected with the wanderings of this Amorite people. This period was that of the Amorites' greatest power; what they lost in Babylonia was won in Egypt, Canaan and Syria. . . .
>
> There is a rich but scattered abundance of material on the language of the Amorites in the proper names and in the name-lists from the time of the first Babylonian dynasty, in the foreign words and proper names to be found in Egyptian texts, and above all, in the foreign words and glosses of the El-Amarna letters. From this it is seen that the language represents an earlier stage of the Hebrew language.[4]

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[4] *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed., Vol. I, pp. 829-30.

CHAPTER V

THE TOWER OF BABEL

The problems which confront us in the early books of the Old Testament are many, and perhaps the most difficult one we encounter is that of the language spoken by the people who, generation after generation, before they could write, passed down the myths and legends concerning the origin of the Hebrews. What was the language spoken by Noah? The compilers of the books of the Pentateuch make this a difficult question to answer because of their general use of Yahweh, who was a god worshiped by the Kenites. Moreover, the difficulty is increased when we find that the editors and translators of our English versions have used a capital "G" when a tribal god is referred to.

These are only a few of the problems that are not yet solved by the experts in Bible lore. We shall have to refer to this matter several times before we reach Nazareth. For the purpose that we have in view, it is of the utmost importance to discover not only the tongue in use at an early date, but also to have some knowledge of how it survived and became the spoken idiom of several different peoples.

In attempting to trace the language from its source, we may begin with Genesis, chapter eleven:

> And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. . . .
>
> And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.
>
> And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.
>
> And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.
>
> Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language that they may not understand one another's speech (11:1, 4-7).

The story bears the hallmark of myth (as distinct from the historical parts of Genesis), and perhaps that is the reason why it has been overlooked by many experts. However, it should not be disregarded, for it contains a touch of reality and a consciousness on the part of the writers of the chapter that the first patriarchs would have to be bilinguists, at least, before they set out on the missions devised by their gods. The necessity of this will be shown several times before Joshua crosses the Jordan. What the one speech was that was spoken by all the people, before the tower of Babel was built, no one knows.

In this respect it is well to remember that only a small portion of the earth was the "world" to the forefathers of Abraham. For them we may suppose that the world was the area in which they moved and had their being. And, yet, that assumption may not hold, for we cannot very well imagine a condition of human affairs in the areas watered by the Euphrates and the Tigris when no trade communications took place with more distant parts. Since the work of Sir Leonard Woolley, we know a great deal more about Ur than the compilers and editors of Genesis knew when they put the Pentateuch together.

There are factors now, which cause us to reconsider the Noah stories. Some of these were touched upon when we dealt with the revelations contained in Dr. Kramer's work, *From the Tablets of Sumer.*[1] The works that have been written upon folklore tales contain many different notions about how they survived, perhaps for centuries before the people who wrote them into sagas knew how to write. But there is no more important problem than this one of the language of the Israelites before the time of Moses. The tongue spoken by Abraham, when he was in Palestine for the first time and shared some of its land with Lot, is not known, nor do we know what the language of Jacob and his sons was when the drought forced them into Egypt.

Perhaps the darkest secret is the one concerned with the speech of the captives. They were serfs for four hundred years, and for more than twelve generations they preserved memories of the missions and exploits of Abraham and Jacob. There were no primitive historians then to keep a record of events, and there are no texts or papyri, or even a monument to give us the slightest account of these early narratives, for Hebrew was not written before about 1000 B.C., although spoken before 1400 B.C. and probably even centuries earlier.

The language problem becomes more and more complicated as the story moves on, after Abraham's visit to Egypt, for it touches more closely the speech of the ubiquitous Yahweh. As the first patriarchs wander, the jurisdiction of the god (or gods) extends from the Euphrates to Palestine and to Egypt. The commands given by the god to Abraham and Jacob were surely not made in the speech familiar to their ears when their missions began. Hence, the question arises: in what tongue did Abraham conduct his affairs when he was in Egypt? Did he speak the language of the country that he was visiting? We do not know. In the case of Jacob, his son Joseph was already there, in a high position at court. But that would not mean that Jacob knew the speech of the Pharaohs.

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[1] *Supra*, pp. 17, 35, 39.

All this may seem of secondary importance to the reader, and not worth the time spent on setting it down. But when we have to deal with the language that became the idiom of the Israelites, it will assume an importance of the first order and one that will increase in value to the end of our story.

The further I search in the works of the expert scholars of Semitic languages, the more I am impressed with their conjectural findings. Some of them are in close agreement on the chief points. As an illustration of this, I must quote two renowned scholars—one English, the other German—who have gone far to enlighten us on this subject. The first is Professor G. R. Driver of Oxford. In the fourteenth edition of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, he has written the article on "Hebrew Language," in which he treats thoroughly of the problems of the language of the patriarchs. He says:

> . . . Tradition asserts that Abraham came from Babylonia by Haran, through Hittite and Amorite territory, into Palestine. The analysis, too, of the Hebrew language shows that those who spoke it borrowed elements from and therefore in all probability passed through lands whose inhabitants spoke the Babylonian, Amorite (or Aramaean) and Canaanite languages. . . .[2]

In considering this, it may be asked how Abraham, a shepherd, transacted his business of bartering sheep and cattle for the commodities that he required. The flocks and herds would increase from year to year, and there must have come a time when the most active nomad would be obliged to reduce his stock. For there is a limit to pasturage, to say nothing about the vigilance that is required night and day to keep the animals under control and see that they are not taken by thieves.

Therefore, it would follow that Abraham remained long enough in district after district to learn the words of the speech of the people with whom he traded.

At a very early period the art of writing was developed in Sumer and Egypt. This makes us curious about the transactions between Abraham and his customers, which called for business details to be put into writing, such as the tablets of Sumer reveal to us. For the art of bookkeeping was practiced there. Whether the knowledge of this will help us to learn the tongue spoken by Abraham or not, it is of value to the student who may be taking a course in cuneiform.

When, however, we turn to Professor Martin Noth, professor of Old Testament, University of Bonn, we learn from him:

> . . . Syria-Palestine in the Late Bronze Age appears to have been the place where this supremely significant and infinitely momentous discovery of a purely phonetic script was developed for the first time. The

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[2] *Loc. cit.*, XI, 354.

> older system of writing of the ancient East, the originally Sumerian cuneiform script . . . and Egyptian hieroglyphs, were extremely complicated combinations . . . which could be written and read only by a handful of specialists and by scribes. . . . It was the invention of an alphabetical phonetic spelling which was able to make do with some twenty different characters that made the universal dissemination of the art of reading and writing possible, since it was now possible for anyone to learn. And this invention had been made in Syria-Palestine *circa* 1200 B.C., and the Israelite tribes were able to learn and adopt it at once.[3]

Although I have shortened the passage, I have given the pith of it.

What an intricate quest it is to go in search of the speech used by the peoples referred to in the early books of the Old Testament. And how tempting it is to speculate upon the many spoken by the peoples of Europe who knew not Abraham.

Incidentally, it may not be out of place to refer here to the finds in recent years at Stonehenge, which give us quite another idea of the age of the famous Druid circle. These huge stones on Salisbury Plain have attracted the interest of archaeologists since history of the dim past was revealed. To take a glance at them will serve to impress us with the fact that the plot of earth covered by the compilers of Genesis was a relatively small one. From the Euphrates to the delta of the Nile, and from the shores of the Black Sea to the southern border of Palestine was the world they knew. Yet, away to the west there were worlds of wonder now coming to light that were unknown to the eastern peoples before the days when Caesar invaded Britain.

Nevertheless the world will always be just that which man himself is content to live in. It may be a village in Siberia or a city in America. The deeper we delve into this subject, the more astonished we are that comparatively few people, in a small portion of the earth, came with their language, culture, commerce and art to dominate the thought of the most renowned scholars of the western world.

Perhaps the most revealing discovery the archaeologists report at Stonehenge is the strange dagger carved on some of the stones. Professor R. J. C. Atkinson, in his book entitled *Stonehenge*, tells us:

> . . . If the axe carvings represent a specific type of axe, of which numerous actual specimens survive, we are entitled to assume that the dagger carving also delineates a specific type of dagger, which was familiar to the person by whom, or under whose orders, the carving was executed. The weapon appears to have a straight-sided tapering blade with a sharp point, expanding into projecting "horns" at its base, with a short hilt and a wide pommel with a flat top. No daggers of this form

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[3] *The History of Israel*, London, A. & C. Black, 1958, p. 39.

> are known in the earlier Bronze Age either of Britain or indeed of Europe north of the Alps. On the other hand, fairly close parallels come from the famous Shaft Graves at Mycenae in southern Greece, the burials of the dynasty of warrior chieftains symbolized for us by the legendary figure of Agamemnon, which can be dated 1600-1500 B.C. . . .[4]

And so our knowledge of the world goes on widening, a microcosm of the universe, just as the renowned astronomer, Sir Arthur Eddington, declared the universe is expanding. What the craft of mast and sail, even when it was propelled by galleys of oarsmen, carried in commerce, art, and religious ritual to peoples far distant from their own ports is one of the most fascinating studies in the history of the past the student can enjoy. Think of Stonehenge and Agamemnon and what these names bring to us in the way of the dramas of Aeschylus, Orphic festivals, and such works as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Before Schliemann went to Troy, the city of Priam was regarded as mere myth by many educated people.

Professor Atkinson states further: "Among the grave-goods of the Wessex Culture there are several objects which provide clear evidence, to which no archaeologists have objected, for trade contacts between southern Britain and the Mycenaean and Minoan civilizations of the central Mediterranean."[5]

Another comparison worth mentioning is the new estimate of the age of the foundation of Stonehenge. Archaeologists have put it back as far as 1900 B.C., and the completion of the temple about five hundred years later. The first date is that of Hammurabi, and about that period the Israelites were captives in Egypt (1800-1400 B.C.).

The work of archaeologists is year by year revealing amazing monuments that have lain buried in the sands for centuries. They are busily adding to the Seven Wonders of the World. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the Colossus of Rhodes with the other five marvels will have many more wonders added to the list.

When we reflect upon such a ruin as that of Stonehenge, the idea creeps into the mind that these Druids had a language of their own. For short, it is called Celtic, and we have a few examples of their skill as poets. They, too, gave to their gods and heroes supernatural powers, and from this we may decide that the hero worship which Carlyle described was no new subject when Thucydides and Herodotus wrote of the political and military giants of their day.

Nevertheless, the Book of Genesis stands alone as a record of a people who conserved the most curious examples of folklore mixed with history that the world knows. With the increase of evidence about early times, we now know there is more historical truth in Genesis than at one time could be believed. But we search in vain for the name of the speech of the people who from father to son treasured the memories of their heroes and kept them alive until the time when those who learned to write could inscribe them upon papyri or on stone.

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[4] London, Hamish Hamilton, 1956, p. 84.

[5] *Stonehenge*, p. 85.

When we pause to reflect upon the vistas of the dark past which are opened up to us by some verses in Genesis, the mind begins to ramble, and our thoughts take us far afield from Noah and his fortunes. It is hard for the student Bible reader to imagine a time when the people spoke one tongue, and it is certainly not easy for him to believe that the building of the Tower of Babel resulted in inventing many languages so that the people would not understand one another. So simple, so ingenuous are these folk stories that many disregard them. Yet, there is much more to be said about the language problem. Millions in the world today know little or nothing of the language spoken in regions beyond their confines.

What language did the Peking Man speak? We read in *The Birth of China* by Dr. Herrlee Glessner Creel that he existed hundreds of thousands of years ago. Moreover, he used stone implements, and his vocation was that of agriculture. But this is not all. The finds in South Africa extend the age of man and make us wonder how old his world is. Then we have the results of excavations in Lebanon and at Mount Carmel, the latter brought to light by Father J. F. Ewing, S.J., and his group. All this is recorded in scientific papers.

Several of the definite claims made by scientists during the nineteenth century have from time to time been submitted to further tests. While I write this, news comes from Italy of the most astonishing discovery anthropologists have made to date. Two miners working at a depth of six hundred feet at a place north of Rome (Baccinello) have found the complete skeleton of a man slightly over four feet high. All but the skull is visible, the latter being hidden by a block of coal which is being chipped away. The dispatch states definitely that the scientists, after long examination of the remains, state that this may be "the earliest progenitor of man that has yet been found. . . . Anthropologists think that it lived at least ten to twelve million years ago."[6]

What an extraordinary discovery to be made in the year of 1958, when the centenary of Darwin's *Origin of Species* was being celebrated. The wonders of scientific search for knowledge will never cease.

The student may read in Dr. Franz Weidenreich's book, *Apes, Giants and Man*[7] a comprehensive record of the recent discoveries in many different lands and the classifications of the specimens. In the work the student will perhaps be surprised to learn of discoveries by anthropologists of ancient man in Lebanon and in Galilee. This links up with our subject.

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[6] Arnaldo Cortesi, "Small Progenitor of Man Found," *N. Y. Times*, August 4, 1958, p. 1.

[7] Chicago, Illinois, The University of Chicago Press, 1946.

We are sometimes startled by information given in a verse in Genesis, which has so far received scant notice by some of the Bible scholars. Take, for example, this one:

> There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown (Gen. 6:4).

In what tongue was this information passed down to a generation that could put it into writing? Surely it gives us an idea of the persistence of folklore tales to survive. May we say without offending those who read Genesis as it is written that there is still a vast amount of work to be done by the scientists, anthropologists and archaeologists, with many a simple statement that has lain for centuries dormant in these chapters.

About three hundred years ago a man by the name of Sir Thomas Browne practiced medicine in the town of Norwich, England. He gave to us two works that are regarded as masterpieces by the greatest experts in literary style: *Religio Medici* and *Urn-Burial*. He was, indeed, a master of English prose, and many times when I went to school I heard my teacher in literature quote sentences from Browne's books. In concluding this long digression, I cannot refrain from quoting the first few sentences from *Urn-Burial:*

> When the Funerall pyre was out, and the last valediction over, men took a lasting adieu of their interred Friends, little expecting the curiosity of future ages should comment upon their ashes, and, having no old experience of the duration of their Reliques, held no opinion of such after-considerations.
>
> But who knows the fate of his bones, or how often he is to be buried? who hath the Oracle of his ashes, or whither they are to be scattered? . . .[8]

From this we may decide that the quest of the scientists for more and more knowledge is making the ancient world a very old one.

This has been a long digression, but I hope it will help the student to understand the immensity of the problem of the languages of the early peoples.

It is not only a matter of the speech of Abraham. It goes farther, and brings us to the origin of the term Hebrew and how it came to be mentioned so early in the Old Testament as it is in Genesis 14:13. In a book of extraordinary erudition, called *In the Beginning*, written by Dr. S. H. Hooke,

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[8] Everyman edition, p. 92.

Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Studies in the University of London, we find a learned exposition of its derivation. Dr. Hooke states:

> There is one more important point to be discussed in relation to the historical setting of the Abraham saga. It arises out of the application to Abraham of the name "Hebrew" (Gen. 14:13). This is the first occurrence of the term Hebrew in the Old Testament. . . . Now, we find in early contemporary sources the mention of certain people who are variously designated as Habirai or Habiru. . . . We do not know the original meaning of the name Habiru, but it is now generally agreed that the Hebrews were a part of the people designated as Habiru whose activities are found so widely dispersed in space and time. . . .[9]

This is a work to be studied carefully, for it contains many new views of accepted interpretations that have recently been called in question.

The reason for this long-drawn-out sketch of the changes and variations of language has been an attempt to determine the problem of how the language of the Arameans supplanted Hebrew as the tongue of the common people. In a recent work we have the views of a man whose name is known to English readers as one of the experts in the controversies that have arisen over the Dead Sea Scrolls. He is A. Dupont-Sommer, Directeur d'études à l'École des Hautes Études, Chargé de Cours à la Sorbonne, and his book is entitled *Les Araméens*.[10] It contains a most comprehensive study of the rise and fall of the Aramean power and how the language persisted long after its empire passed away. Dr. Dupont-Sommer says that Aramean continued to be the spoken and written language in Palestine for several centuries; in fact, in the time of Jesus it was the spoken language of the people, and in the synagogues the sacred writings were read in Aramean. Thus were written the Targums, which are the Aramean translations of the Bible.

Still extant are the Talmud of Jerusalem, some inscriptions on synagogues and Jewish ossuaries, which give evidence of Palestinian Aramean, according to Dupont-Sommer. It is to be hoped that this book will be translated and find a wide circulation in the theological seminaries of this country. Its value may be estimated by the following declaration: "In Palestine, it [Aramean] was substituted for Hebrew as the common language: it is in Aramean that the Jews indited the Targums and Talmuds, in Aramean that Jesus of Nazareth preached his Gospel."[11]

Dr. J. F. Stenning, Warden of Wadham College, Oxford, who was university reader in Aramaic, has written especially upon the Targums. He says, "The Targums are the Aramaic translations—or rather paraphrases—of the

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[9] Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1947, pp. 74-5.

[10] Paris, L'Orient Ancien Illustré, 1949.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Books of the Old Testament, and, in their earliest form, date from the time when Aramaic superseded Hebrew as the *spoken* language of the Jews.''[12]

In the chart made by G. R. Driver, in his article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (14th ed.) on ''Semitic Languages,'' we find there that the earliest date of the Aramaic is put at 750 B.C. and that it was derived from the Amorite to which a date 1750 B.C. is given. Driver's table of the Semitic Languages is compiled from the earliest known documents.[13]

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[12] *Ency. Brit.* (14th ed.), XXI, 809.

[13] *Ibid*, XX, 316.

CHAPTER VI

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM

In the tenth chapter of Genesis we find the genealogy of the family of Noah, who lived to the age of 950 years. The first verse tells us, "These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood." Then in thirty verses we have the names of the sons and grandchildren—an abundant progeny. The last verse states that these families divided the nations after the flood, "and the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech."

In chapter 10, also, we find the limits of the area of Canaan, which are described as follows: "from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Adamah and Zeboim, even unto Lasha" (Gen. 10:19). The geographical knowledge of the scribes at a period as early as that of Noah is quite surprising, but the names of the places where the families dwelt have, to some extent, been traced by the archaeologists. One branch of Noah's people "found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there"; and they began to build a city and a tower. While they were at work "the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded."

Then for some reason, presumably a rebellious act, the Lord went down there to "confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech" (11:7). When this was done the Lord scattered them from that place into all lands. Later, we read that Terah begat Abraham at the age of seventy. One of his sons, Harran, "died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees." But Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Harran.

Now begins the story of the call from the Lord to Abraham and the purpose of the mission the Lord commanded him to undertake. Why he should have been chosen for it is not made clear. However, the command is given in precise terms:

> . . . Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:
>
> And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:
>
> And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3).

The journey was to be one of a thousand miles into the land of Canaan. Abraham had gone as far as Harran, 600 miles northwest of Ur, with his father. With them also were Sarah, Abraham's wife, and Lot, his nephew. We are not told how long it took them to make the journey to Harran, where they dwelt for some time, but it is recorded that Abraham was seventy-five years old when he went forth from Harran to go into the land of Canaan.

Recent discoveries suggest that Abraham was a Sumerian and dwelt in the kingdom of Mari. If that be so, perhaps the language that he spoke was a non-Semitic one. The people he was to father were nowhere in the region of the lower reaches of the Euphrates. They were far away to the west of Jordan, in Canaan, where the son of Ham had settled.

The controversies concerning the age, the occupation, and the mission of Abraham are just as acrimonious today as they were a generation ago. Later I shall refer to the differences of opinion expressed by scholars in works that have been published in recent years. For the present we shall try to keep our minds upon those who were to bless Abraham and where they were to be found. We know they were not in Harran, but were they in Canaan? It seems that when he entered that country, the Canaanites occupied it. He passed on from Shechem to a mountain that was on the east side of Bethel, where he pitched his tent. And there he built an altar. But he had not found his objective, his resting place, and so far there is no mention of people giving him a welcome. He seemed, after he had left Harran, to be always on the move, for after the altar was built there came a famine in the country. "And Abraham went down into Egypt, to sojourn there: for the famine was very grievous in the land" (12:10).

Another matter that has been scantily treated by the scholars concerning the story of Abraham is the elusive difficulty of trying to reconcile the commands of Yahweh with Abraham's native speech, for when he set out upon his journey, the people were scattered and the tribes no longer spoke one tongue but many different ones, so that they could not understand one another. Yet, Abraham seems to have had no difficulty in his journeyings from Ur to Harran, and from Harran into Canaan down to Bethel, in procuring the necessaries for daily needs. No wonder the language problem has been one of the thorniest Bible scholars have attempted to elucidate. It runs all the way through the Old Testament to the extraordinary events that took place in Jerusalem when illiterate persons suddenly became fluent linguists. The language problem is not only difficult to solve in Old Testament narratives; it is likewise one of the chief problems concerning the mission of Jesus and his trial before Pilate.

Some of the scholars have written informative pages upon the cult of the Chaldeans; some suppose it was a form of idolatry. That it combined the solar cults with star worship is probable. But certainly it was not monotheistic. Yet, in Genesis and Exodus and other books of the Pentateuch, one deity and only one communed with the people who became Hebrews. Yahweh was a jealous god, a parochial deity.

How the notion became current two generations ago that Abraham was a shepherd has never been explained. There is nothing in Genesis to give one this idea of his occupation. The journey from Ur to Harran and then into Syria seems to preclude the shepherd story. The only evidence of this calling was gleaned from an old print showing Abraham with a shepherd's crook and a flock of sheep about him.

Yet, there is a great deal about shepherding and flocks of sheep connected with the patriarchs and the prophets, as we find them in the Old Testament. And if we turn to the Egyptian records, we learn of striking instances of herdsmen and their flocks in and about the Nile territory. Indeed, Genesis 12:16 recounts that the Pharaoh "had sheep, and oxen, and he asses."

Professor Flinders Petrie discovered on a monument in Egypt a reference to "people of Ysiraal." It appeared on a stele erected by Merenptah II. The scholars now agree that it refers to the Israelites mentioned in the Bible. The inscription refers to "the nomads of the Egamite Shashu or shepherds" They were called marauders and invaded Egypt. Dr. Albert Churchward, in *The Origin and Evolution of Religion*, says they were "a tribe, or totemic community, of cattle-keepers."[1] They went down into Egypt in search of food for their herds.

We also know from Genesis that it was a famine that caused Abraham to leave Canaan. Whether he did so because he had herds and flocks is not told.

The excavations of Sir Leonard Woolley at Ur and the neighborhood, have tended to introduce new ideas about the vocation of Abraham. The recent discoveries at his native place reveal the extraordinary facts that Ur was no farming village, but a city that had reached a high plane of civilization. Hence, the question of his real vocation and how he undertook his long journey over a circuitous route.

The distance from Ur to Harran is so great that it seems incredible that sheep could be herded so far. One of the many difficulties about this business is that there is no mention of dogs accompanying him upon the journey. And they are as necessary as a shepherd himself in keeping sheep together along a track limited in width. Sheep wander off one way and another to a patch of grass, and it is a dog that turns them back to the fold. A shepherd does not not go after one that strays to the right or the left. He remains behind and orders the dog to keep the flock together. Therefore, there may be something worth considering in Sir Leonard Woolley's notion that Abraham was a business man.

A scholar has suggested that he and his family must have ridden animals, for such a journey could not be undertaken on foot. Here, again, is another impediment to the idea of driving a flock of sheep. The action of a camel behind a flock can scarcely be imagined, for a couple of strides of a camel would start the sheep running. Drovers take care that they do not run the fat off their bones before they reach market.

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[1] London, George Allen & Unwin, 1924, p. 292.

How the members of the party were sustained during the journey we do not know. At that time there might have been many villages along the caravan routes to the north where they camped for the night and found food. Nor are we told why he went north to Harran. There must have been a much shorter way to Canaan, where he was to find the people he would father. What was the route taken by the exiled Canaan? Perhaps there is an omission that would have given us the reason why he did not take the shorter route.

Dr. Werner Keller in his book, *The Bible as History*, shows us a map of Abraham's journey.[2] From Harran, where Terah died, the journey south was resumed under God's command. His route is given as through Palmyra, Damascus, and Hazor to Shechem, where he built the first altar.

How Abraham survived the vicissitudes of traveling through these territories is a mystery. He, with Lot and their families, covered an immense territory, at a time when kingdoms were shaken by the eastward thrust of the Amorites. These latter people have now been identified as Semites who settled in Palmyrene. Whether the patriarch, as he proceeded on his journey, gathered recruits as converts is left for us to imagine. In Genesis there is no record of a single utterance of his until he reaches the Land of the Pharaohs.

But stranger than the journey and his silence is the matter of just where he found the people he was to father. One of the scholars has it that a branch of the Canaanites was of non-Semitic origin. When Abraham set up the altars at Shechem and Bethel, presumably he and Lot with their families composed the congregation that worshiped. Then came the famine that drove him south to Egypt. On approaching that land, he decided it would be politic for his wife to assume the role of a sister. This change of relationship is the source of one of the few amusing stories in the early books. The Pharaoh fell in love with Sarah, but the outcome was fortunate for Abraham, who left Egypt a rich man, in possessing gold and silver, and herds of cattle.

There is little or nothing in the story of his sojourn in Egypt that would indicate any contact with people there who were the object of the mission. This is strange for it has been suggested by some of the scholars that the Israelites had been slaves of the Pharaohs for many centuries before the time of Moses.

The wars of the Hittites and the Egyptians brought about not only a confusion of tongues but also a mixture of peoples. Recent archaeological evidence of these civilizations has been found in remote places. There are so many questions to be considered, so many problems concerning the object of the mission and where Abraham's people were found, that we wonder at the courage of the scholar-archaeologist who in some cases regards present knowledge as final.

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[2] London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1956, p. 71. For the latest information on the wanderings of Abraham, the student may turn to the new book by Dr. Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (1959) esp. ch. III, pp. 61 ff.; see also *supra* p. 36.

The first response of the people came after the death of Sarah, when Abraham asked for ground for a burial place for her. Abraham informed them that he was a stranger and merely a sojourner in the land. The people who received him and granted his request were descended from Canaan; they were the children of Heth. They hailed him as a "mighty prince" (Gen. 23:6).

His description of himself as a stranger sojourning in the land brought no protest from the people, which is curious, because he had divided the land with Lot and carried on the work of farming sheep. And all this was done without protest from the inhabitants. We learn that there was strife among the herdsmen. However these confusions may be resolved, it is plain that only a small section of a tribe acknowledged him as an eminent person. Whether they knew they were the real objects of the mission is not explained. Indeed, we are left to surmise that of the many tribes or nations mentioned at the time that Abraham was in Canaan, only a particular branch of Semites was he destined to father.

One important matter that deserves some consideration is his passage through Galilee. We may assume that after he left Damascus, his route took him not far from the Phoenician coastline, towards the borders of Samaria. Seemingly Galilee was a place of no interest at that time. Many generations had to come and go before it became the center of events that have lingered in the memories of men for the past two thousand years.

The experts are not agreed as to the prehistory of the Phoenicia which includes Syria and the strip on the coast that ran down past Sidon and Tyre. The date of 1500 B.C. is marked for the maritime activity of these people, and some of the investigators of this seafaring people have decided that they were a northern branch of the Canaanites, judging from their language.[3]

Whatever the language was that was spoken by the inhabitants at the time Abraham passed through the country, it must have been corrupted by the tongues of the foreign invaders who came from the south and the north. And as for the mixture of blood between the native people and their foes, that must have gone far to alter the character and appearance of the inhabitants. Perhaps the reason why central Galilee bears few traces of military camps is that, in all probability the inhabitants were pastoralists of settled abode, poor prey for plunderers whose chief objectives were the strongholds that have been unearthed by the archaeologists.

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[3] R. H. Pfeiffer, "Early Empires of Africa and Asia," reprinted from W. L. Langer's *Encyclopaedia of World History*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1940 and 1948, p. 32.

CHAPTER VII

ORIGINS OF RELIGION

The use of the word God with a capital "G", as we find it used in the Old Testament stories of Noah and Abraham, surely indicates a very late date of compilation. What the word was for the deity of Abraham one can only surmise. He received the first command in Babylonia to undertake the mission. And now that we know the names of the Sumerian and Hurrian gods, the story reads as though the deity of the time of Isaiah and the Minor Prophets had spoken to him.

Many interpretations have been given by the experts as to how the name Yahweh came to be adopted by a certain tribe. But all seem to concur in the belief that it was a tribal god and should be spelled with a small "g." What the adopters have done with it is quite another matter. Tribal gods were numerous, but in name, nearly always the exclusive possession of a clan or a cult. So far, the archaeologists have not attempted to identify any of these gods with the Supreme Being, the Creator, the Father of all tribes. In this sense, there can be only one; the idea of two Creators is unthinkable.

God, the Father of all mankind, the beneficent Creator, who provides for all His creatures, is not a parochial steward to be called upon by the distressed. Nor is He to be held accountable for the sufferings men impose upon themselves. He has endowed them richly with faculties of power sufficient to exercise a goodly life. Perhaps the best statement that has been made upon this point can be found in Joseph Butler's *Analogy of Religion:*

> Now, in the present state, all which we enjoy, and a great part of what we suffer, is put in our own power. For pleasure and pain are the consequences of our actions; and we are endued by the Author of our Nature with capacities of foreseeing these consequences. . . . I know not that we have any one kind or degree of enjoyment, but by the means of our own actions. And by prudence and care we may, for the most part, pass our days in tolerable ease and quiet; or, on the contrary, we may, by rashness, ungoverned passion, wilfulness, or even by negligence, make ourselves as miserable as ever we please. And many do please to make themselves extremely miserable—i.e., to do what they know beforehand will render them so.

For depth of understanding and clarity of expression, his statement has never been matched. Although it comes from the mind of one of the most renowned ecclesiastics in the English Church, it is seldom appreciated by the sectarians of any denomination.

Therefore, we may doubt that the deity who sent Abraham upon his mission was any other but the tribal god of the people of Ur. The fact that one comparatively small group (not named) was selected for this particular blessing vitiates the notion that God the Creator favored one group to the disadvantage of others.

It is hard to make sense of this welter of cults and various theogonies. Those Egyptologists who have traced the beginnings of what is called "religion" back to the dim period of the Nilotic pygmy are not wrong when they say that the earliest place of worship was one of thanksgiving, and that man piled up a few stones and called it an altar. This idea fits in with the definition of religion given by Lactantius, which is: "Religion is that which binds man to an invisible Creator." In this statement the notion of a tribal god disappears. This makes sense, for an invisible Creator is one without preference.

There are more books written about religion, its form and practices, than any other subject. The shelves of the most famous libraries are crowded with works of scholars of nearly all denominations. Yet, the controversies are not still. They rage with less bitterness but nevertheless with increasing force. It would be a gain to the disputants if they could rid their minds, for the time being only, of Christian conceptions of its meaning. We might then better understand that it is as ancient as the thought of man. Indeed, religion is conscious man, and can only be understood in the primitive form by looking back in the history of the creature to the time when he realized that there was a power higher than himself, who provided the source from which he drew his sustenance.

Perhaps he began to think it out when he saw the operations of nature at work. The plant springing from the soil gave him the clue to naming the oldest deity. The sprouting herb came from the womb of nature, and the land that he cultivated he called Mother. She was always present, there at all seasons to serve him. Like a child upon its mother's breast, he was nurtured by the land he tilled.

Perhaps tens of thousands of years passed before he thought of the relationship of other powers to this mother. There was the sun, and when he associated it with the earth, he called it Father. At this stage of his reasoning he became assured that the crops he grew were the progeny of this union.

It is impossible for us to imagine the process by which he worked out these riddles of nature. For example, he must have been mystified when he experienced crops growing in a period of gloom; and that sometimes it was warmer when the sun was covered with cloud than when it shone. All these variations and disturbances of natural phenomena came gradually to him, and perhaps took many tens of thousands of years to bring about the ancient orderly theogony.

When man had reached the very early stage that Dr. R. R. Schmidt so beautifully describes in his work, *The Dawn of the Human Mind*,[1] of realizing that an indispensable supernatural power had placed the earth at his service, the first thrill of religious emotion brought him to his knees. After bowing his head in thanksgiving, he rose, collected boulder stones, and raised an altar. Is there any other way we can explain the origin of religion? I have searched work after work for more than fifty years to find an acceptable description of its beginnings, but in vain. All seem to me to start with more or less complete theogonies and the ceremonials conducted by priests. To my mind this is beginning the inquiry at a late date in man's religious history. All this goes to confirm that man was religious before there was a priest.

Thirty years ago I found in a secondhand bookshop all the volumes of Max Müller's *The Sacred Books of the East*,[2] and I devoted most of my spare time for a year or so to combing them for information not usually found in works by Christian authors. I was so deeply impressed by my studies that I set to work writing *The Eleventh Commandment*.[3] In it the reader will find my ideas clearly expressed on primitive religion in Chapter III. It was not until after I had published this work that I turned to Sir James G. Frazer's remarkable volumes called *The Golden Bough*, and there I read that he was under the impression that religion began as a form of propitiation to the deities. In his elaborate and beautifully expressed analysis of the idea, he presents us with the origin of religion as forms of ceremonials.

To my mind, propitiation was the child of fear, and fear is an emotional disturbance of a being that has reached a rather advanced stage in cultural development. Awareness of dangers, such as fire, lightning, night, flood, drought, and pestilence, to say nothing of plagues of locusts and other insects must have developed after long, long generations of experiencing them. Therefore, propitiation (as Sir James Frazer would have it) seems to me quite a different emotional impulse from that of thanksgiving. Altars were not always built for sacrificial purposes. It is true we read in Genesis that after the subsidence of the flood, Noah built an altar and sacrificed animals. But that must have been inserted by an editor many centuries after the catastrophe that overwhelmed Noah's earth.

When Abraham reached Canaan, he built three altars, but he did not offer sacrifice until Isaac was to be the victim. Perhaps that was the first one to take place in the Promised Land. For the first tillers of the soil who realized that their sustenance sprang from the womb of Mother Earth, thanksgiving is surely a more natural impulse than propitiation.

The ritual of propitiatory sacrifice originates from the time when man was conscious that powers higher than himself controlled the elements. This period came long after man erected the first altar of boulder stones and knelt to thank Sun and Earth for his sustenance. Scarcely a year passes now that the discoveries of archaeologists do not force us to revise the notions we held a generation ago. Kathleen Kenyon in her book, *Digging up Jericho*,[4] tells us that in a house unearthed in the "first" Jericho (dated about 5000 B.C.) there was one room which corresponded to a shrine. In a niche in one wall was a pedestal; a stone chipped to a pointed oval was found not far away, which fitted exactly the pedestal and the niche. Other small objects corresponded to figurines representing the Mother Goddess, which were later connected with fertility in many Near Eastern cultures.

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[1] Trans. by R. A. S. Macalister, London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1936.

[2] Forty-nine vols., Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1894.

[3] New York, The Viking Press, 1933.

These are only two of many such finds that give us an idea of cult practices that reach back far beyond the days of Noah and Abraham. Leviticus is a work that describes in detail the objects and procedures of the ritual devised for Israel. The inclusion of this book in the Pentateuch has been a source of much controversy. Some critics date it much later than the days of Moses. Certainly we learn nothing of such minute practices until we reach the time of David and Solomon. When was there opportunity during Joshua's campaigns for the high priests to inaugurate these ritual practices?

Some of the critics question the editorial choice of placing them immediately after the announcement of the commandments. It is not easy to understand the juxtaposition of the two, for all the commandments may be kept without an observance of the ritual. And, indeed, it is possible to perform all the ritual exercises and disobey the commandments. Not only the history of the Israelites gives us reason for thinking so, but the history of the church since the Council of Nicaea teems with examples of this order.

Therefore, it seems reasonable to accept Moses as the author of the commandments; but the high priest of another age—perhaps five hundred years later—must have been the ritualist who was responsible for the extraordinary detail given in Exodus, chapters 21, 22, and 23.

The first chapter of Leviticus is so full of minute detail that it is inconceivable it could be produced by great bodies of people always on the move. Perhaps we shall never be able to work out the problems that arise in Leviticus. It may be best for the student to give more attention to the economic purpose of sending Abraham on his journey and the ethical commands given by Moses to the Israelites before they entered Canaan. If we do this, we shall be on safe ground. Too many Bible critics have been led astray by giving an importance to the ritual of propitiatory sacrifice and neglecting the dominant aim of Abraham and Moses.

The stories of Noah and Abraham were adapted to the thought and desire of one particular group, which existed not earlier than the eighth century B.C. The language, so the experts tell us, dates the stories.

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[4] London, Ernest Benn, 1957, p. 59.

But the journeys of Abraham do not take us to this people that he was to father. He passed away before they realized who he was. He did not find them in Canaan, nor is there any reference to them when he visited Egypt. On his return to Canaan, his business was economic and political. And yet he did not set up a State, although he became a soldier and conquered four kings. It may very well be that only part of the story has survived in the folklore; that there are great omissions, wide gaps, in it must be obvious to one who reads it closely. How strange that the multitudinous progeny of Ham, who became Canaanites, have a history which is not commensurate with the object of Abraham's mission. We shall see this when we deal with the campaigns of Joshua.

My learned friend, Sidney Smith, who has honored me by reading the chapters of my book, comments that the name Abraham may be a symbol standing for the epochal migration of a people. The suggestion acts like a spur to my flagging mind, for I remember the hours that I spent in trying to satisfy myself that the Melchizedek episode had some historical significance. If Abraham is the name given to a symbol, it is not easy to explain how the king and priest of Salem went to meet Abraham with provisions. For in this story Abraham is a man and not a symbol. However this may be, I would recommend that the reader study the searching criticism of Dr. Edmond Jacob in his book, *Theology of the Old Testament*.[5] There he will find an elaborate discussion of both Abraham and Melchizedek and how they were regarded in the religious story of its priesthood.

The little we know of this event of greeting Abraham with bread and wine makes us crave more information about this "king of righteousness," To the student who takes these passages literally, it may seem to be one of the many instances of omitting further detail or excluding matter that the editors thought not worth recording. Melchizedek comes and goes almost in a spectral manner. As a person, after the greeting of Abraham, he vanished from the scene, and the curious reader who desires to know more of him is left to resort to the elaborate discussions to be found in several of the works by the Bible experts during the past few years.

When such eminent scholars as Sidney Smith and Dr. Jacob, to mention only two of several who have given us books of late, take us away from the bare verses of Genesis into the fertile crescents of their exploring minds, we find the nourishment of information withheld from us by Scripture. Many years ago these controversies about the meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek startled pious readers, and now that we have so many elaborate examinations of the evidence, there are still problems concerning the episode, which have not been solved.

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[5] Trans. by A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1958.

One is concerned with the military genius of Abraham. How a peaceful shepherd (or a traveling merchant) suddenly became a conquering soldier has never been explained. It has been asked where he found his army. Nor have we had a satisfactory statement upon the prescience of Melchizedek. He was a Canaanite king and priest, and though some of the critics are inclined to accept the idea that the religion of these two great personages was not dissimilar, it does seem strange that a Canaanite should welcome Abraham with fervent respect.

The passage in Genesis 14:18-19 about this event is not accepted as having historical validity in any sense. Some of the critics say that it was inserted for the specific reason of giving a progenitor to the priestly class of Israel. Nevertheless, the funds of information presented in Dr. Jacob's study will be welcomed by the Bible reader who desires to learn more than the verses in Genesis give him.

In connection with the meaning of the name Melchizedek, Dr. Jacob deals with his title as the "king of righteousness," and (for the first time, to my knowledge) shows clearly the difference between the old meaning of the two terms, *righteousness* and *justice*.[6] This is a most important addition to our knowledge, which should be kept firmly in mind, for there will be frequent passages in the Prophets and in the Gospels that will have to be interpreted in quite a different way than we find in the King James version.

It seems that there is no end to the attempts to elucidate scriptural problems by raising others, and this adds to the confusion which deters so many eager people from learning what these eminent Bible scholars have thought upon the problems. Controversy yields to controversy afresh, and the debate still goes on and will engage the minds of profound scholars as long as the Bible is read.

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[6] *Ibid.*, esp. ch. VII, "The Righteousness of God," pp. 94-102.

CHAPTER VIII

TWO OPINIONS ABOUT ABRAHAM

More than fifty years ago I began my study of Jesus, and his ideas sent me back to Isaiah and the Minor Prophets to learn about the economic condition they denounced. The information gathered from this exercise formed the basis of the many lectures I delivered for five years before the First World War. Archaeology then had not interested me much, and I knew very little of the criticism of Bible scholars. However, when I heard about Garstang's work at Jericho, his discoveries shed a new light upon my views of Bible history, and I began to read Dean Milman and other authors who wrote about the history of the Jews. I felt the serious lack of academic knowledge and my woeful ignorance of the Hebrew and Greek languages. Latin I read with difficulty; the only modern language I was familiar with was French. The more important books of the German Bible scholars I read in translation.

Then in the summer of 1935, Dean Dwelly of Liverpool Cathedral took me to the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Liverpool and introduced me to John Garstang. This was an epoch-making event in my life. After viewing the finds that were exhibited there, I asked Garstang if he had any plans, and he told me that he wished to go to Galilee and excavate two tells that lay between the lake and Haifa. In a letter he set out his goals:

> (a) Tell Keisan, which may prove to be Achshaph, upon which my hopes are centred for the time being.
>
> (b) Kedesh Naphtali, which you will find to the north-east of the Huleh Lake, and was the first city in the north to be occupied by the tribes of Israel. From this place Deborah summoned Barak to unite the tribes against Sisera.
>
> (c) The real site of Hazor.

I had already read *Joshua, Judges*, his book on Bible history, and when I heard of his desire to go to Galilee, I became enthusiastic for the enterprise. This was the beginning of the Neilson Expedition to the Near East.

The recent discoveries of the archaeologists frequently remind me of a question Garstang put to me before I left him that afternoon. He said, "What is your interest in this? What are you looking for?" And I replied, "The first covenant." He shook his head and smiled graciously, as if I had asked him to find the Philosophers' Stone. The enterprise in Galilee did not materialize because of friction between the Jews and the Arabs. Garstang then went to Kemal Pasha and asked if he would be permitted to work at Mersin. The story of what he did there is now well known to archaeologists and Bible scholars.

Therefore, it is to John Garstang I owe so much, which enables me now to put down these rather scattered thoughts that have perplexed my mind, as they have done those of the most renowned men who have devoted their lives to the study of Bible history. When I think of the men I have met since that time, such as Sidney Smith and Professor Edward Robertson, to say nothing of those who have been good enough to correspond with me, like Dr. R. H. Pfeiffer and Dr. W. F. Albright, I cannot help but feel that I have been permitted to enter a world I never thought was open to me.

This brings me to my thoughts upon the mission of Abraham before I was familiar with the astonishing discoveries of Sir Leonard Woolley at Ur and the districts round about the mouths of the Tigris and the Euphrates. To say that I was skeptical of the old notions of Abraham's vocation is to put it mildly. To me it seemed irrational to consider that he traveled so far behind flocks of sheep. When I questioned some of the sheep farmers who supported me when I was a candidate for an agricultural division, I was told what was necessary to keep sheep on the move, and what was required in getting them to market without the loss of weight. Their opinions were at variance with what would have been possible for Abraham if he had shepherded flocks. And now—many decades later—this very problem has become one of heated controversy.

The Reverend S. H. Hooke, Emeritus Professor of Old Testament, London University, says that "the long gap in time between the entry of Abraham into Canaan and the descent of Jacob and his family into Egypt, a gap which raised many difficult problems, has been reduced by about two and a half centuries."[1] He refers to Professor Sidney Smith's monograph *Alalakh and Chronology*, which is based on Sir Leonard Woolley's excavation of Tell-el-Atchana. Professor Hooke puts the date of Hammurabi between 1792-1750 B.C., and says "if the synchronism of Abraham with Hammurabi be still accepted, that gives us the approximate date of Abraham's entry into Canaan."[2]

There are two entirely different views about the vocation of Abraham. One is represented by Dr. Sidney Smith:

> . . . It is no longer easy to doubt that the story of Abraham the Hebrew sums up the tribal history of a part of the Habiru if the circumstances of his life are considered broadly. A typical nomad, he is able to wander from one place to another; possessed of great flocks, he avoids the crowded industrial areas whose religion and civilization he regards with horror. . . .[3]

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[1] "Archaeology and the Bible" in *The Bible Today*. London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955, p. 19.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

The other view is that of Sir Leonard Woolley, who uncovered Ur of the Chaldees. He tells us:

> We must revise considerably our ideas of the Hebrew patriarch when we learn that his earlier years were spent in such sophisticated surroundings; he was the citizen of a great city and inherited the traditions of an ancient and highly organised civilisation. The houses themselves bespoke comfort and even luxury. Apart from the actual fabric there was little left to throw light on the daily life of the inhabitants, but one or two stores of tablets did bear witness to their intellectual interests. We found copies of the hymns which were used in the service of the temples, and with them mathematical tables ranging from plain sums in addition to formulae for the extraction of square and cube roots, and other texts in which the writers had copied out the old building inscriptions extant in the city and had compiled in this way an abbreviated history of the principal temples.[4]

These views are so wide apart that it might be well to consider how the journey was encompassed by Abraham when he left Ur or some place in that district. It is important here to mention that some specialists regard Ur (as we find it in Genesis) as the name of a district, not a particular city. We do no violence to the time-honored story if we ask ourselves some practical questions. When he left for the north, he had with him his father and other members of the family, how many we are not told. If his vocation was that of a wandering shepherd, he would have to provide himself with all the means that were necessary then for camp life. The main provender probably was the milk of goats or asses, but pots and pans would be necessary for stewing and baking. Sacks of cereal of some kind would certainly be taken. The equipment for the journey would be transported from place to place upon the backs of animals, gelded bulls trained to work the grinding stone, or perhaps a couple of tethered asses.

When we consider the matter of finding pasture for sheep and goats, we have to discard cattle, for the two herds call for separate methods of droving and herding. Even today, one seldom sees a sheep grazing with milk cows or steers fattening for the market. A day's march would depend entirely upon how long it took to move from one pasture to another. To a great extent, herbage for cropping would regulate the distance traveled between sunrise and sunset.

I have slept under tents in the desert, and I know how cold the night wind can be, but perhaps it was different in Mesopotamia for Abraham than it was for me south of the Gizeh pyramids. One of the most important seasons for Abraham would be lambing time. Before the ewes delivered, he would have to find a pasture with plentiful herbage where the flocks could stay six or eight weeks, and this would entail close search.

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[4] *Ur of the Chaldees*, New York, Scribner's, 1930, pp. 168-9.

We are not told whether or not he sold any of his animals for meat or the shearings for wool. And we may presume that this business was done when spring set in. There are so many problems to be considered in the first part of this long journey of six hundred miles to Harran that we might extend them for pages, heaping difficulty on difficulty, without reaching a satisfactory notion of the way a nomad shepherd with flocks lived from day to day.

If, on the other hand, Abraham was a townsman of the order Sir Leonard Woolley suggests, it is scarcely possible that he would be handicapped by having to drive flocks. The camel seems to have been limited to the breeders of the interior desert, and for a merchant or the agent of one traveling from city to city with goods, the ass would be a slow mover. The horse, although known at the time, was not used as a pack animal until much later. However, this notion of Abraham as a merchant prince is directly opposed to that of Sidney Smith and those like him who prefer an Abraham who was a nomad.

Still, all this leaves out of account the dominant factor in the story, which is the quest for the people he was to father and the land in which they were to settle. This is not without its difficulties. Why it was necessary to go to Harran and travel west hundreds of miles to Syria, we cannot imagine, for nothing directly concerned with the mission happened on the way. We hear little or nothing about Lot until he reaches Shechem and Bethel. We know that Canaan must have reached the land that took his name, but we are left in doubt whether his descendants were the people that Abraham was to father. There are so many gaps in the story that we do not wonder at the several attempts by Bible scholars to fill them. The omissions are so glaring that sometimes the purpose of the journey is forgotten. Truth to tell, the journey from Ur to Harran, and then from Damascus down to Bethel, as a narrative is not to be compared with Abraham's sojourn in Canaan and his visit to Egypt. These latter contain detail which have a touch of realism about them. Surely the compilers who put these stories together were not deeply interested in the mission itself, whether Abraham was a nomad shepherd or a traveling merchant; otherwise they would have described the long journey to reach Canaan with something of the dramatic effect they gave to his friction with Lot and his wife's affair with the Pharaoh.

There are many links missing in the chain of events mentioned in Genesis and Exodus, where the narratives of the journeys of Abraham and Jacob are set forth. It is hard to resist the temptation of trying to fill them, for the imagination is stimulated. For example, in the wandering mission of the first patriarch, all we know is that he went to Harran and from there to Damascus, and afterwards to Shechem. There are no details given to us of the journeys between these points. Indeed, the story is bare of incident, and when we ponder the problem of why he took that route, the only event we can call to mind for the first leg is the death of his father in Harran. Otherwise, there seems to be no reason for the course he pursued.

To one who thinks of detail of this order, it might seem strange that he did not take a shorter way. One would be to travel from Ur directly west across the Arabian desert to Jericho. Perhaps that had no attractions or advantages for a shepherd with sheep, such as the Fertile Crescent offered. Jericho is not far from Shechem, and seemingly at that time the city that later fell to Joshua was in a flourishing condition. If we keep in mind (while trying to discover some reason for the longer route) that the object of it was to find the people Abraham should father, we cannot avoid the notion that he was seeking the human flock. But this he did not find, even when he reached Canaan. It is a perplexing problem.

Stranger still are the changeable moods of Yahweh. Canaan was scarcely a Promised Land for Abraham. When he reached there, after building the altars at Shechem and Bethel, his troubles increased. Presumably Lot was a sore affliction at times. The strife that arose among the shepherds strikes a note of reality in the story. Why did it occur? Probably because Abraham's sheep strayed over the borderline into Lot's pastures, or vice versa, Lot's flocks went over the border line to the west. Such discords were common among sheep-raisers long after the Christian era began. There are instances of similar frictions in the local histories of England recorded after sheep-raising became profitable to the Plantagenets.

But why should a drought be inflicted upon Canaan? What sin had Abraham committed that called for such a visitation? The vagaries of the moods of the god that promised so much of fruitful issue to the mission of Abraham submitted him to anxieties and sorrows of dearth and the labor of searching for new pastures. This is only one instance of somewhat inconsistent treatment of those selected for special purposes.

Yet, there is one impression we gain from study of these stories, and that is the almost childlike intimacy of man with his god. Yahweh is so near sometimes to Abraham and also to Jacob, as we shall see, that we seem to feel his presence. And the reliance of the creature upon his "guide and comforter" bewilders the understanding, for the one who is commanded does what he is told to do and never asks the reason why it should be done. Noah walked with God. So did Abraham and Jacob, but Canaan's mission was a lonely one.

One of the most interesting stories of the period of Abraham is that of Ishmael, the son of an Egyptian bondwoman. When he was grown, his mother selected an Egyptian for his wife. The maker of many nations promised a career for him that was not less glorious than that promised to Isaac. Still, Ishmael and his mother had to suffer in the wilderness probably because she was an Egyptian. And, yet, when he became a man, an Egyptian wife was chosen for him. These peculiar anomalies may be traced in this literature for many centuries after Abraham and Jacob passed away.

One of the characters in the early history whose purpose arouses our interest is the son of Ham, who was cursed for seeing Noah's nakedness when he lay prone, after drinking too much wine of the grapes that he grew. He was condemned to be the slave of his two uncles, Shem and Japheth. Yet, he was destined to give his name to the Promised Land. How he reached there we may only guess. But Scripture and the scholar-specialists give him short shrift. Indeed, he seems to be wilfully neglected by the compilers who put together the story of Noah and his sons. We know nothing of him when he reached Canaan (or the land that was to be Canaan). We are not told that he married or had children. On this, Scripture is as silent as the Bible scholars. As for his uncles, they too are scarcely mentioned as the story develops. Afterwards, the course of the narrative points directly to the land lying between Jordan and the Mediterranean.

CHAPTER IX

JACOB

> And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan (Gen. 37:1).

The first mention of Israel in Genesis is in the story of Jacob (32:28). The name was conferred upon him after he wrestled with God. So it was left to the grandson of Abraham to be the founder of the Israelites.

Jacob was advised by his father, Isaac, not to take a Canaanite woman for his wife but that he should go to Padan-aram (Harran) to find one. Some purists have suggested that it was a strange selection for Yahweh to make for the purpose of founding a family that was to do such wonderful things. Indeed, some look upon Jacob as the black sheep of the family. His escapades have been a sore trouble to many who would try to explain away the unusual choice of such a man for the task. However, we must not be too critical about the conduct of men in days when rules were not so precise as they are now. And, yet, it must be admitted that some of the things that were done were scarcely becoming in shepherds either of beasts or of men.

How many years passed before the famine began in Canaan? Some of the experts put it at 46 years, for Jacob was 84 when he married and 130 when the trek to Egypt began. It was an extraordinary adventure, to be uprooted from the lands in Canaan and travel through areas affected by the drought to reach green pastures. However, Joseph, his son, was in command in Egypt and they were sure of being welcomed by him. Indeed, they were received generously (although the Egyptians did not like sheep farmers), and they were allotted lands in Goshen, there to raise their cattle and flocks.

Only the family of Jacob and his blood relations are concerned in this story. There is no mention at all of any other people accompanying them to Egypt. They were told to be fruitful and multiply, a command they carried out in full measure. They throve and grew so numerous that they became a power in the land, so that when there was a change of ruler, they were regarded as a great political liability. It was feared that they might unite with an enemy of Egypt and overthrow the Pharaoh. Here begin the long years of captivity when they were subservient to taskmasters:

> And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour:
> And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. . . . (Exod. 1:13-14).

Again the pertinent question arises concerning the language that they spoke when they left Canaan. No doubt it was in daily use during the long years when they tilled the lands of Goshen. What it was has not been determined. Could it have been Hebrew? Was Hebrew a language at that time? Who can tell? There is a record that many Hebrew words were discovered in Egyptian documents.[1]

Surely this indicates that the relations between the newcomers and the natives had fared well, owing perhaps more to commercial give-and-take than to social interchanges. We learn at the time of the captivity that the Hebrew women were quite different from the Egyptian. That is made plain in the order of the Pharaoh to the midwives to kill the boy babies at birth.

To what extent did the Hebrews (if they were then so called) adapt Egyptian to their tongue? There is a wide hiatus between the period when the captivity began and the time when the Israelites left Egypt under the guidance of Moses. Some of the experts place it at 400 years; others even more.

It is not to be imagined that the Egyptian taskmasters were conversant with the tongue spoken by their slaves; and it is reasonable to infer that, in such circumstances, the slaves would be more likely to learn the language of their captors than the masters the speech of their charges. This problem of language recurs constantly, and since it arises again when the Israelites get to Canaan, it is not an unimportant matter.

The seventy who had gone into Egypt with Jacob were fruitful to enormous proportions. Some experts estimate that they multiplied to such an extent that about 3,000,000 people made their way to Canaan across the Red Sea.

When Jacob was nearing his end, he called his sons and their sons to him, and instructed them concerning their future in what he called "the land of your fathers." He asked them not to bury him in Egypt, but

> In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace (Gen. 49:30).

Great events were to happen before they placed his bones in the favored resting place.

To what extent the land named after the son of Ham was populated by his descendants cannot be determined. We know not where Canaan found his wife. Neither her line of origin nor her name is revealed. Perhaps the reason for this is that the stocks that came from Canaan and Heth were not acceptable to those of Jacob's line.

A most instructive short essay upon this will be found in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, written by Dr. F. M. Theodore Böhl, Rector of the University of Gröningen. His description is as follows:

> . . . Palestine must have been settled by a people from the north about 1600 B.C.; with this people were mixed the Mitanni and Harri, and all

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[1] See *supra* ch. IV and ch. V, esp. pp. 40 and 45.

> were under the dominion of an Aryan population. We find in Amarna times Indo-Aryan names among the rulers of Canaan. It is possible, though not demonstrable, that the Canaanites were connected with these conquerors who may be historically regarded as the forerunners of the Philistines. Thus, the two commonly-used names of the Holy Land, Canaan and Palestine (*i.e.*, "land of Philistines"), originate with non-Semitic peoples who were merely temporary rulers there.[2]

This throws a new light upon the inhabitants of the land where Canaan found his dwelling place. If he did not become a poor relation, the people who followed him have been treated by the scriptural scholars with a neglect that is hard to explain. But so it was with the other two sons of Noah. They settled to the north, and history loses all trace of them after Abraham leaves his home to undertake the great mission.

How strange that Abraham and his wife and Jacob should be laid to rest in a land of strangers, who became the foes of Joshua. They must have been an exceptional people who received Abraham and the family of Jacob, for there is no record of protest against the taking of their lands. The division that was made by Abraham and Lot is a unique example of appropriating foreign territory without bloodshed. But blood enough was to flow in the years to come, and many were the wars to be fought before the land was apportioned among the tribes.

The unsettled conditions of the tribes in Canaan and the countries north and south indicate that there was no one particular stock to be found from the Syrian border to the delta of the Nile. From the north there came down a people, of the Indo-European language group, who brought with them a high degree of culture, as their remains examined by archaeologists have made plain to us.

When Jacob was driven by the drought to the land of Goshen, we should not overlook the probability of there being among his followers people of very different stock than that of Father Abraham. We learn frequently of intermarriage; indeed, even so late as Ezekiel, who tells us that Hittites were partly responsible for founding Jerusalem about the thirteenth century: "Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan: thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite" (Ezek. 16:3 and 45).

After centuries of invasion, we may feel sure that it was not only the family of Jacob that suffered from the drought and went in search of land for their flocks, but that other peoples were bent on the same errand. How intermarriages were to be avoided cannot be explained, and we are not far wrong if we imagine that the land of Goshen was peopled by others of far different stock from that of Israel.

There is also another matter to be considered, and that is the result of the Hyksos invasion in Egypt, and their rule of the land from 1720 to 1580

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[2] "Canaan," *loc. cit.*, 14th ed., IV, 688.

B.C. We learn that they founded Jerusalem, building there a great stronghold, and that Judea was held by some quarter of a million of their armed men. Here again we have to consider the matter of mixed marriages and perhaps what is more important, the vexed question of the different languages spoken by so many people of widely different culture. Perhaps at that time Hebrew had not been perfected as a tongue and perhaps it was used in a polyglot way. This is worth a moment's thought because we now know the approximate dates when the different Books of the Old Testament were written. An interval of a thousand or nearly fifteen hundred years in the perfecting of a speech leaves room for the consideration of its use in writing. We have only to think of the changes in English, not only in chirography, but in the choice of words since Wyclif translated the Bible, to the days of Coverdale, and then down to the King James version.

Nowadays we are often reminded of the changes that take place in speech and writing during a generation. Nevertheless, the literary form, when something like perfection has been reached, is maintained by the purist. Perhaps Hebrew is the only language that suffers from critical examination by the specialist. Sometimes it is a wrong letter that gives another meaning to the term. One has only to read Joseph Klausner, the renowned Hebrew scholar, to get an idea of the corrections that have been made in Hebrew script. His work, *Jesus of Nazareth*, is a revelation in this respect.

Taking these perplexing matters into consideration, we cannot help but wonder how the people, settled in Goshen at the time of the migration of Jacob and his family, communicated with one another. And this affects to some extent the history we have of this period. The Israelites have left us little or nothing that can be identified as relics of their culture. So far, the archaeologists have not discovered in Palestine a single monument of the time that can be attributed to the Israelites. It is not difficult to explain this absence of relics. As we shall see, when we come to the settlement of the tribes, their discipline and observances were narrowly restricted by Levite rules and regulations. There was no scope for the arts. The cities they inhabited were ancient before Moses passed away. In suppressing their foes, they took all that they could find by the command of Yahweh. In this respect their history is unique.

But above all contributions the people of early culture have produced, there stands the Bible which, notwithstanding the attacks of critical scholars and the finds of the archaeologists, remains impregnable as a fortress of laws that have borne the test of all the vicissitudes of Christian nations for nearly two thousand years.

In recent years many books from the pens of English authors have come from the press. These are distinguished for bringing the information of the discoveries of the archaeologists up to date, and in many cases the finds substantiate the story of the movement of the Israelites as recorded in Genesis and Exodus. Two generations ago few educated people would have believed this possible. There are, however, several important matters to be cleared up, and it might be said that opinion is still in a fluid state regarding them. Perhaps the work that will serve to clear up some of the uncertainties regarding the origin of the people called Hebrews, the language they spoke and their system of settlement as a nation of homogeneous folk comes from a German source, Dr. Martin Noth, professor of Old Testament, University of Bonn. The first German edition of *The History of Israel* was issued in 1950. The English translation, however, has been made from a revised and enlarged edition (London, A. & C. Black, 1958) and is therefore perhaps one of the latest comprehensive books on the Old Testament to appear.

The knowledge of the author is so wide and deep that we hope there will be a demand for its publication in this country. I should like to quote much from it, but space permits me only to give the reader an idea of the way Dr. Noth deals with four of the most important problems we have touched upon thus far.

> . . . Excavations in Palestine have given us a fairly clear picture of the Bronze Age civilisation in that country. . . . This is in exact accordance with the fact that, according to Old Testament tradition, the Israelite tribes found "Canaanites" dwelling in permanent cities when they occupied the land. . . .
>
> This is also confirmed by the fact that in the Old Testament the name "Canaanite," with which it was customary to describe the whole of the old non-Israelite and pre-Israelite population, whose ancestors had maintained the civilisation of the Bronze Age, occasionally assumed the special meaning of "merchant" and "trader."[3]

The term Canaan or Canaanite has been used so freely even by educated amateurs, in referring to Bible stories, that one wonders if they know just exactly what it means. This from Dr. Noth gives us a picture of what is called Palestine long before Joshua crossed the Jordan.

Further on he says that, although in the third millennium B.C. men of Semitic language formed the main mass of the population, and scholars usually describe the basic stock of the population, with its different Semitic dialects, as "Canaanite," there is evidence that points to the original inhabitants having been non-Semitic.

> . . . When the Israelite tribes arrived, however, they still found that the language spoken was the Semitic "Canaanite," and, like many earlier immigrants, they and their relations adopted this language in place of the probably Aramaic dialect they had spoken previously. . . .[4]

In the fourteenth century B.C., a non-Semitic element is introduced, particularly in the urban centers, with the appearance of Hurrians in large

[3] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 21-2.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

numbers. ''Their language,'' says Dr. Noth, ''is neither Semitic nor Indo-Germanic,'' but ''has been proved to be cognate with the language of the Urartians.''[5]

Concerning the Hyksos domination of Egypt, we learn from Dr. Noth that their influence spread far beyond the banks of the Nile. He tells us:

> It is hardly possible to avoid the conclusion that the rule of the Hyksos, which possibly extended as far as Mesopotamia, and certainly included Syria-Palestine and, finally, Egypt, was the result of a great migration which came from a northeasterly or easterly direction and introduced a powerful new ruling class into the ancient Orient. . . . Thus the face of Syria-Palestine in the 14th century . . . was influenced in many ways by the preceding rule of the Hyksos.[6]

The Hyksos knights established themselves as minor rulers in many cities in Syria-Palestine in the period between the end of the eighteenth century B.C. and the beginning of the sixteenth.

Professor Noth explains the term ''Hebrews'' in a unique way. He tells us that the ''Hebrews'' were known throughout the whole world of the ancient Orient, and they were characterized because ''they usually had to undertake or perform services of various kinds.'' These ''Hebrews'' are mentioned in the ancient Babylonian Empire, in the Mari texts, in Hittite Asia Minor and in Syria-Palestine, but Dr. Noth says without question that it was the name of a people.

> . . . It was more a particular term for a special legal and social position; and we occasionally find the word used in this way in the Books of the Law in the Old Testament. People or groups of people with inferior legal rights and small financial means appear under the name ''Hebrews''; they perform services where and as they are required. They did not belong or perhaps no longer belonged to the various strata of the old-established population but represented certain restless nomadic elements who had no roots in the soil. . . .[7]

In a later chapter, when describing the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt, where they had gone to ''preserve their life'' and were admitted to the land of Goshen, Professor Noth says that in Egypt these Israelites lived ''as people with inferior rights who were usually called 'Hebrews'; and the fact that the Old Testament often uses the word 'Hebrews' when referring to the Israelites in Egypt is entirely in accordance with the actual situation.''[8]

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 33-4.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

CHAPTER X

MOSES

No other character of the Old Testament has been given such deep and widespread consideration by scholars as Moses. His is a story of never-failing interest, for the more one ponders it, the more questions arise that are far from easy to answer. It is full of suggestion, packed with historical problems that defy analysis in many cases. Indeed, it covers the whole of his life, from his birth to his last breath taken before he placed foot upon the Promised Land. After one has studied the books and essays written by Christian theologians upon Moses, another world of thought is presented when one compares the research of authors who are not so easily satisfied with what is written.

The story of his birth and of the escape of the babe from the consequences of the order given to the midwives marks him as the child of Levite parents. His own mother nursed the child for three months, and then fearing the authorities might find him, she hid him in the bulrushes. The daughter of Pharaoh, who was bathing in the river, discovered "the ark among the flags" and "she sent her maid to fetch it" (Exod. 2:5).

The babe was returned to the mother to be reared, but we do not know for how long: whether he was taken into the royal household after he was weaned or later, when he had learned to walk and talk, is not clear. Still, some of the scholars would have us understand that he learned Hebrew and religious tenets from his mother. One theologian has put into short compass what many of them have written at great length in their books:

> . . . [His mother] so thoroughly imbued him in childhood with the traditions of his people, that all the allurements of the heathen palace never eradicated those early impressions. He had the finest education Egypt afforded, but it did not turn his head, nor cause him to lose his simple childhood faith.[1]

There is nothing in the Exodus story to give rise to this imaginative notion. It does not take into account the danger of the Egyptian police finding the boy, who was in peril as long as he stayed with his mother. No one would know that better than Pharaoh's daughter. Therefore, she adopted him, paid the mother off for nursing him, and took the child into the royal household.

As to the supposition about his instruction in the faith of his fathers, it is not at all likely that an infant would learn much, if anything. What was the faith of the fathers at that time? And what was the language spoken by the Levite family?

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[1] Henry H. Halley, *Bible Handbook*, Chicago, Illinois, 20th ed., 1955, p. 116.

The Israelites had been in captivity for hundreds of years, and it is doubtful whether, at the time of Moses, they spoke the tongue of Jacob. Still, we do know that many Hebrew words are found in Egyptian inscriptions, but this does not imply that the language was a spoken one then any more than it was by the population of Palestine before the fall of Jerusalem. The language problem, one of the most difficult of all to perplex the scholars, is of the greatest significance in ascertaining facts about what might have been said and done in so many historical portions of the Pentateuch.

Those who accept the story literally, as it is unfolded in Exodus, ignore the findings of the scholars who search for further information, which might go far to substantiate many of the incidents, the sayings and other questionable matters. It is not sufficient to put these aside by saying they are merely romantic notions of legends. Not all romance is fiction—not by any means—and we now know that many of the legends which were not accepted by Lecky, Huxley, Robertson, and other rationalists or agnostics, have been substantiated by the finds of archaeologists. However, this does not clear the difficulties out of the way. Many scholars of repute have confessed how hard it is to attempt to resolve the perplexities that are so abundant in Genesis and Exodus. Stanley Arthur Cook, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge University, is only one of a great number of scholars who have done this. He says:

> Close study of the Pentateuch, in connection with the political and religious history of Israel as presented to us in other parts of the Old Testament, makes it difficult if not impossible to accept the tradition which ascribed to Moses every detail of Israel's legal and cultural institutions. It was inevitable that these should be traced back to the great hero, and there is evidence which suggests that in some quarters other elements in Israelite life, repudiated by the orthodox Jew, were once attributed to him. . . .[2]

This refers particularly to serpent worship in Jerusalem and the bull worship of Bethel and Dan. Later on, we shall see that these were not the only instances of worship that was supposed to be foreign to the Israelite. Dr. Cook continues:

> Beyond question Moses must be regarded as the founder alike of Israel's nationality and of Israel's religion. His leadership in the Exodus and his prominence in the great covenant at Sinai (or Horeb) are hardly to be doubted. It was he who welded into one people the various kindred tribes under his leadership, and it was he who introduced Israel to Yahweh and Yahweh to Israel. But further details must be a matter of

[2] "Moses," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed., XV, 843.

> conjecture. . . . Yet, with all this doubt, the fact remains that Moses stands out as one of the greatest figures in history.[3]

Moses was all that, and a great deal more. In his foresight he planned for the settlement of the tribes (after the campaigns of Joshua) an economic system free from politics. The advice of Jethro to him to install judges to decide the quarrels and frictions of individuals reminds one of a similar system in India, which Sir Henry Maine gives in his essays. Still other unique matters of deep concern attributed to him will be dealt with later on, when we come to the apportionment of the Promised Land to the twelve tribes.

There is a gap in the story of Moses as a boy, which no one has attempted to fill, for there is nothing in Exodus that gives a clue to the questions that arise from it. How old was he when he was taken into the royal household? And when did the Pharaoh's daughter give him a name? We may presume here that his parents had not found one for him, for the one he bore was Egyptian, not Hebrew.

The descriptions of the babe given in some of the recent translations of the Old Testament are not scriptural; they read like corrective translations. One speaks about him being a "handsome" baby at three months old (Moffatt), and another says: "So winning were the child's looks" (Knox) that for three months the mother hid him away from the authorities.

Several translations of the name "Moses" have been given. Among them "rescuer," "removed," and "one drawn out of the water." One of the peculiar renditions of the vessel in which the child was placed is that it was made of "papyrus reeds, daubed over with bitumen and pitch" (Moffatt). However, these are details of no great importance. Still, they do not help us to solve the matter of the age of the child when adopted by his rescuer and taken into the royal house. It is inconceivable that, as an active boy and youth, he would be permitted to romp about his mother's place under the eyes of the police (or whatever the watchmen were called). We are not told that they were instructed to leave him alone; therefore, unless otherwise ordered, it would have been their duty to throw him in the river.

Perhaps the name will serve as a guide to his origin. Freud calls the Biblical explanation "obviously inadequate," and goes on to quote the Jewish Lexicon (*Jüdisches Lexikon*): "The Biblical interpretation of the name: 'He that was drawn out of the water' is folk etymology; the active Hebrew form itself of the name (Mosche can at best mean only 'the drawer out') cannot be reconciled with this solution."[4]

Professor J. H. Breasted states: "It is important to notice that his name, Moses, was Egyptian. It is simply the Egyptian word 'mose' meaning

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[3] *Ibid.*

[4] S. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, trans. by K. Jones, N. Y., Vintage Books, 1955, p. 4.

'child.' "[5] But it was always compounded with a god-name. Surely the name, having been given to him by Pharaoh's daughter, indicates that his adoption came early in his life.

A healthy boy without a name can scarcely be imagined, for he must have had playfellows, nurses and other attendants. Now the question arises, "Who schooled him?" He probably had all the advantages of a prince, but how are we to account for the astonishing gap in the story from the time of his adoption until he is old enough and strong enough to slay an Egyptian taskmaster? This is a very difficult problem to bridge. As for the rest of the tale, in which we are told that Pharaoh heard about the murder, Moses fled to Midian and there he met Jethro's daughter, Zipporah, and married her.

There are many peculiar lapses in the narratives about the great personages presented in Genesis and Exodus. One, in particular, is connected with Aaron, who was three years older than Moses. But we do not learn anything of him until Yahweh, in Midian, reminds Moses of his brother. Where has he been all this time, and what was he doing?

From what follows after he meets Moses, we may infer that he was born before the edict was issued to destroy the male children of the Hebrews. Probably he remained with his parents, and at manhood became a priest. We are informed that the latter was eloquent; quite the reverse of Moses, who was "slow of speech." Here the language question arises again to perplex us. Freud says:

> . . . Moses spoke another language and was not able to communicate with his Semitic Neo-Egyptians without the help of an interpreter—at least not at the beginning of their intercourse. Thus a fresh confirmation of the thesis Moses was an Egyptian.[6]

Freud's interpretation coincides with the colloquies that took place in Midian between Moses and Yahweh and, in some respects, it supports the statement of Breasted as to the meaning of the name Moses being Egyptian. There are so many interpretations made by the theologians concerning the difficulties of speech of Moses that, on reflection, one might decide that he knew no Hebrew. Monsignor Knox, in his translation of the Old Testament, interprets the reluctance of Moses to carry out the instructions of Yahweh "as a remonstrance, not as an act of submission." Further, he is of the opinion that the description of Aaron as "The Levite" "seems out of place here; it is perhaps due to some corruption of the text" (Exod. 4:14).

The rest of the story of the long captivity and the departure of the Israelites need not detain us. We shall leave it to the theologians to differ as to solutions of the problems imposed by it.

However, it is pertinent to ask how Moses knew that the slaves were his brethren. He saw them at work under the taskmasters, and was sorry for them. The passage reads: "he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens" (Exod. 2:11). And this took place when he was grown. This incident has raised many different notions as to the length of the period he had spent in the royal household.

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[5] *The Dawn of Conscience*, N. Y. Scribner's, 1934, p. 350.

[6] *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

He was the adopted son of a princess, and one may assume that his life, at that time, was spent with Egyptians. Assuredly he must have spoken the language of the court. How he knew the captives were his brethren is not explained, and it leaves us in the dark as to his probable age when he slew the taskmaster. Again, we must decide that it is better to leave these matters to the theologians for clarification, though it must be said that they have not yet revealed a desire to meet on common ground.

Would the princess who adopted Moses let the royal household know that she had broken the law of the edict, which condemned to death the babes of the Israelites? This is not at all likely, for her maid would be bound to secrecy.

Many have wondered why it was that Moses was not circumcised. Here the imagination may help us to solve this problem. Perhaps the Levite father did not perform the act, so that the child might escape the vigilant investigators who had to carry out the edict. This seems reasonable enough, for the babe was put in the ark when it was only a few days old. Surely when Moses passed from childhood to young manhood, he would know whether his foreskin had been removed or not. Regardless of whether or not he considered himself a Hebrew, his name was Egyptian; the daughters of Jethro recognized him as Egyptian; and in the scenes with Pharaoh, when Aaron accompanied him, Egyptian must have been the tongue that was spoken.

If we follow Freud's idea of the royal descent of Moses, such a theory makes chaos of what follows in the career of the protagonist. For, if he were an Egyptian, would he kill an Egyptian guard who was maltreating an Israelite? This does not seem reasonable, for it is the slaying of the guard that is the cause of Moses' flight to Midian.

I do not know to what extent the Hebrew version of these incidents differs from the details set down in the King James version. But here we are dealing with the story as it appears in our Bible. If Moses were of royal birth, there would be no killing of the guard. In our version, the scenes that follow are along the line of sound dramatic construction. The long arm of coincidence is not stretched here.

It is a simple story developing upon its own events. If Moses does not go to Midian, he does not meet Jethro, and more important still, he does not meet Yahweh. And if he does not meet Yahweh, he does not return to Egypt to liberate the captives. That a prince of the house of Pharaoh should rescue the serfs and spend forty years in the wilderness with them seems to be an absurd notion. The story as it stands in the Bible is credible, even though there are great gaps in it, and undoubtedly some important facts have been omitted by the editors and compilers of the eighth and sixth centuries B.C. But one's imagination, set in motion by the narrative itself, can supply the gaps and omissions. Unfortunately, years ago it was considered irreligious to give play to the imagination in reading the Bible stories.

When we read the instructive works written by such men as R. H. Pfeiffer, W. F. Albright, Sir Frederic Kenyon, Edward Robertson, and Sidney Smith, we are reminded of that troublesome, yet insistent, WHY? It occurs in chapter after chapter of Genesis and Exodus. And it will not down by muttering the taboo "This is Scripture," or "words of divine revelation." One cannot be accused of hypercriticism for attempting to reconcile the extraordinary contradictions to be found in the work. We have a fairly good idea now how these arose. Long centuries of oral tradition had not only enlarged but embellished many of the stories. That always happens. Man is the legend-maker, and he will never rid himself of the craving to magnify his gods and glorify his heroes.

Who would be so stupid, in the light of the astonishing discoveries made by archaeologists, as to place implicit faith in the authenticity of Scripture? And who imagines a conscientious student would set to work upon the tasks that face him without an inquiring mind? Let us say at once that we may attribute to the inquiring mind—that which has not ignored the insistent WHY—the work of the greatest scholars, who have themselves responded to it by giving us information that would have been pronounced as sacrilegious two or three generations ago.

None of this stupendous investigation has derided or damaged the historical validity of the main threads of the story. Indeed, in many respects, they have been confirmed and further substantiated by archaeologists who have found in tablet and script the names of the heroes and the places where they dwelt. As an example of this meeting of tradition and historical fact, Dr. Albright says:

> . . . The "king who knew not Joseph" and who oppressed the Israelites should be a pharaoh of the New Empire, after the expulsion of the hated Asiatics from Egypt. With this agrees the fact that the Israelites were settled around the Hyksos capital of Egypt, in the "plain of Tanis" (Zoan, Psalms 78:12, 43). That there was a long Semitic occupation of the northeastern Delta before the New Empire is certain from the Canaanite place-names found there in the New Empire, which include Succoth, Baalzephon, Migdol, Zilu (Sillo), and probably Goshen itself. That there were a good many Semites among Hyksos officials is certain, and it is also clear that most of the Hyksos chiefs bore Semitic names, among which is Ya'qob-har (literally, "May the Mountain-god Protect"), formed with the element "Jacob." It is impossible to separate the tradition quoted in Num. 13:22, according to which Hebron was

> founded seven years before Tanis, from the Hyksos invasion of Egypt, and difficult to separate the Hyksos era of Tanis, according to which 400 years had elapsed at a time shortly before the accession of Ramesses I (1320 B.C.), from the 430 years assigned in Ex. 12:40 for the duration of the Israelite sojourn in the district of Tanis. In short, it must be considered as practically certain that the ancestors of part of Israel, at least, had lived for several centuries in Egypt before migrating to Palestine.[7]

Long before the important finds of archaeologists, there were men of inquiring mind drawn to the Bible narratives, who explored reasons for the omissions and the problems of causation, which are manifold. Sir Frederic Kenyon, the renowned librarian of the British Museum, tells us of a remarkable discovery of the interest of a great scientist, Sir Isaac Newton (1733). It is as follows:

> The race of the Kings of Edom, before there reigned any King over Israel, is set down in the book of Genesis (xxxvi, 31); and therefore that book was not written entirely in the form now extant before the reign of Saul. The writer set down the race of those Kings till his own time, and therefore wrote before David conquered Edom. The Pentateuch is composed of the Law and the history of God's people together; and the history hath been collected from several books, such as were the history of the Creation, composed by Moses, Gen. ii, 4, the book of the generations of Adam, Gen. v, 1, and the book of the wars of the Lord, Num. xxi, 14. This book . . . was begun by Moses. And Joshua might carry it on to the conquest of Canaan. For Joshua wrote some things in the book of the Law of God, Josh. xxiv, 26 . . . , and Samuel had leisure in the reign of Saul to put them into the form of the books of Moses and Joshua now extant.
>
> [The Book of Judges was compiled after the death of Samson out of the Acts of the Judges.] Several things are said to be done *when there was no King in Israel*, Judg. xvii, 6, xviii, 1, xix, 25, and therefore this book was written after the beginning of the reign of Saul. When it was written, the Jebusites dwelt in Jerusalem, and therefore it was written before the eighth year of David, 2 Sam. v, 8, and I Chron. xi, 6. All these books have been composed out of the writings of Moses, Joshua, and other records by one and the same hand after the beginning of the reign of Saul and before the eighth year of David.[8]

These historical observations of Newton are even today among some of the deep problems of Scripture that harass the minds of the most renowned scholars. Alas, among our physicists today we have no Newton giving us treatises upon the authors of books of the Bible.

[7] W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1940, p. 184.

[8] Kenyon, *The Bible and Archaeology*, N. Y. and London, Harper, 1940, pp. 270-1*n*. Prof. Edward Robertson agrees with Newton's argument that "the Pentateuch and Joshua must have been shaped by Samuel," and makes it the central feature of his book, *The Old Testament Problem*, Manchester Univ. Press, 1950.

The story of how Moses brought the captive people together to follow him on his mission to Canaan produces many questions in the inquiring mind; for example, such men as those who read the critical tracts published by rationalists fifty years ago. It is not sufficient to set this matter aside with the remark that there are no such readers today. That may be so, but it cannot be denied that the skepticism of the mass today goes deeper than it did at the turn of the century.

Let us, therefore, revive some of these questions, if for no other purpose than to convince the man in the street that there is a world of interest for him in the Old Testament, entirely apart from the wonders and miracles that are ascribed to the patriarchs and Moses. Much of the history contained in these books can be read as one would read the lives of the founders of nations such as Greece and Rome.

Let us, then, return to Moses and the mission he has to undertake when sent by Yahweh from Midian back to Egypt. He has been assured that, when he confronts the Pharaoh, his brother Aaron will be his mouthpiece. A spokesman, we take it, who is fluent in the Egyptian tongue. To amaze the monarch Aaron casts his rod and it becomes a serpent:

> And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.
>
> Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.
>
> For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods (Exod. 7:10-12).

I can remember when this story was received by certain skeptics with derision. They did not know it had a historical connotation, which goes far to lighten some dark passages concerning the education of Moses. There is a special significance in the choice of the serpent as an object emanating from a rod, which would affright the Pharaoh.

Professor Alan H. Gardiner, formerly Worcester Reader in Egyptology at the University of Oxford, says:

> The form of a snake, attributed to many local goddesses, especially in later times . . . was borrowed from the very ancient deity Outo (Buto); the semblance of a snake became so characteristic of female divinities that even the word "goddess" was written with the hieroglyph of a snake.[9]

I seem to remember a figure of Isis with a snake coiled upon her head. Perhaps I saw it in the museum at Cairo. The reptile was used by the people for many purposes, and no doubt Moses, having been brought up in the royal household, was familiar with its powers. In another place Gardiner says that Egyptian magical documents "deal for the most part with the healing of diseases, the bites of snakes and scorpions, etc." Later on we shall see that Moses had to use the snake again, but in another form. This demonstration of magical power might have had a symbolical significance; it may be suggested that the snake of Moses typified the nation of Israel which, by eating the snakes of the sorcerers, was a portent of its power to destroy the snakes of other nations.

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[9] "Egypt," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., IX, 50.

CHAPTER XI

THE EXODUS

The story from the time the Exodus began until the settlement of the twelve tribes in Canaan is, in its way, as thrilling as scenes from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. How Moses gathered together the captives for a trek lasting forty years in the wilderness is a miracle of organization. Where were they? We know now that the Goshen that was allotted to the family of Jacob lay just to the east of the delta of the Nile, and we assume that the great works that were undertaken by Ramses II were in the mouths of the river, to the west of Goshen, where the Nile flows into the Mediterranean.

Was the Exodus a carefully planned enterprise? The rallying of so many gangs of captives, under the supervision of their taskmasters, surpasses our knowledge of any similar call to arms in recorded history. We cannot imagine that the area in which the captives worked spread very far in any direction. It is now considered unlikely that the captives were scattered to the south in the districts of Memphis and Saqqara, as some of the critics imagined years ago. Whether the word of revolt had been passed before Moses met the Pharaoh to intercede for the slaves is a moot point. Perhaps Moses had his lieutenants all ready to communicate swiftly with every gang of captives.

Communication with a distant part would probably be through the use of a runner. Whatever means were taken to bring the people together—men, women and children—it was a marvel of organization. Yet, on reflection, we must conclude that there had been years of preparation for the great trek. The impedimenta for this host must have been enormous. There is no mention of draught animals, neither camel nor horse figures in the story.

What is perhaps most surprising in this uprising is that they were not restrained by the Egyptian guards, for the Israelites seem to have moved to one particular spot from which their great concourse would start to leave Egypt. Yet, though this achievement beggars description, it does not exceed in wonder the amazing feat of molding "a stiff-necked people" who had been slaves into disciplined, military forces. From the first, when Moses realized what he had been commanded to do, he decided he had to train an army of his male captives.

There is no mention of their carrying arms. Weapons they had none, unless an arsenal was rifled at the place where they congregated. One of the commentators says they had swords and javelins, but there is no suggestion in the Book that they rifled an arsenal. Where could they find weapons? The Egyptian army that followed them met with disaster when recrossing the Red Sea, and we may assume that their weapons sank with their bearers in the waters that engulfed them. When and how these people were set to work to make weapons is left to the imagination of the reader.

When we think of their commissariat, the story becomes stranger still. How could such a congregation move forward without having supplied themselves with the necessaries of existence? Did Moses know Yahweh would provide for them? In chapter 16 of Exodus we learn of plentiful supplies of quail and manna that were forthcoming. There were also other products of the earth enjoyed by the captives and provided by Yahweh. There never was a story like this, for it extended not for forty days or forty months, but for forty years.

If the reader regards these questions as captious, he may be reminded that the same ones were asked about Hannibal's army crossing the Straits and taking the elephants over the Alps. Similar points may be raised about some of the gaps in Caesar's campaigns in Gaul.

Those who have rejected the story root and branch find it hard to reconcile their skepticism with the topographic and geographic description of the journey to Sinai. Most of the places in the eastern delta have been traced by explorers and archaeologists, and in this respect everything fits. Therefore, we give a credence to accounts that seem hard to believe, and reflect upon the wizardry of the persistence of folklore, while recognizing, at the same time, that perhaps the numbers have been exaggerated and other details "embroidered." Of the Exodus, Professor W. F. Albright writes:

> . . . With our present knowledge of the topography of the eastern Delta the account of the start of the Exodus given in Ex. 12:37 and 13:20 ff. is perfectly sound topographically. . . . Many additional pieces of evidence for the substantial historicity of the account of the Exodus and the wandering in the regions of Sinai, Midian, and Kadesh can easily be given, thanks to our greatly increased knowledge of topography and archaeology. We must content ourselves here with the assurance that there is no longer any room for the still dominant attitude of hypercriticism toward the early historical traditions of Israel. Even the long contested date of the Exodus can now be fixed within reasonable limits. . . . If we place it about 1290 B.C. we can hardly be far wrong. . . .[1]

As for myself, I wonder what our so-called Christian art and literature would have been without these anecdotes. They have inspired the masters of the chisel, the pen and the brush to give us enduring reminders of them. When I think of what has been written upon biblical subjects that have been treated by the sculptor and the painter, I realize their value in stimulating authors to write prose of the highest literary worth.

Could we really imagine sculpture in its greatest period without Michelangelo's "Moses," to be seen in the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli, Rome?

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[1] *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940, pp. 194-5.

Think of the different conceptions of David, portrayed by the most renowned sculptors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The statues of this character by Donatello, Verrocchio and Michelangelo are at great variance. Also, when reading modern authors, I often wonder how the best of English literature can be appreciated without a thorough knowledge of the Bible.

Dr. Werner Keller in his book, *The Bible as History*,[2] is only one of a score of writers who, in recent years, have attempted to amplify the story and make it real to us. Dr. Keller has performed a great service in giving us a map of the places through which Moses and his followers passed. It is a thrilling experience to follow the route on the map and compare the place names with those given in Exodus.

Perhaps no commander in the history of military adventure had as difficult a task as Moses in keeping his people from mutiny; but he was always equal to the occasion, and relief came to him when the people had abandoned hope. Such was the case when they hungered, and manna satisfied their physical needs. How different it was, though, when their minds turned to the gods and customs of the land in which they had labored for four centuries. In Numbers we learn of their reversion to Egyptian idolatry and how Moses dealt with the case. There was a plague of serpents, the people realized that they had sinned, and pleaded with Moses to pray for their deliverance.

> And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.
>
> And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived (Num. 21:8-9).

Here again, the serpent becomes a factor in another miracle. The people had been obsessed by the Egyptian customs of their environment, and when they could bear their hardships no longer, they revolted against their leader. The story of the making of the golden calf by Aaron is one that is not peculiar to the Israelites. Cults of idol worship lingered for centuries in the customs and feasts of early peoples. They found in a thing made by hands an expression of divine power. In this case their minds were permeated with themes of Egyptian idolatry. The women decked themselves with earrings and bracelets. The gravity of the crisis at that time is clearly stated in Exodus:

> . . . Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him (32:1).

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[2] London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1956.

When Moses descended from the mountain with the tablets, his anger at the people's reversion to idol worship was so great that he broke the two tables. Then he took severe measures to be rid of the recalcitrants.

> And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.
>
> And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men (Exod. 32:27-28).

It is remarkable how we are affected by a touch of reality when reading these stories of the revolts. We should remember that the Pentateuch was edited many centuries after Moses and the captives left Egypt. This accounts for the style and expression given to it. For all we know, Hebrew may not have been the tongue in which the folklore was carried down the centuries, for it has not been fully determined when Hebrew became a spoken and written language.

I asked Professor Edward Robertson how the Hebrew tongue could have been sustained for speech during the long captivity before Moses came upon the scene. And his reply was, "Where a language is closely tied to a religion, and particularly one strongly held, its survival is assured." However, this does not answer the question of the language that was spoken by Jacob and his people. The very fact that the captive hordes, during the long trek on foot, rose in revolt against the leadership of Moses and demanded an idol to worship—the golden calf—indicates that they still thought and spoke in the Egyptian manner.

It should be observed here that monotheism was not original with Moses. Before him, the Egyptian Ikhnaton abolished the old gods. A succinct statement of the change that was made is given by Kurt Seligmann in *The History of Magic:*

> Today we know that Israel had no monopoly of the idea of One God; nor can the chosen people claim to have been the first to conceive monotheism, which, we know also, became the Egyptian state religion under the young monarch Amenhotep IV. He declared the old deities deposed (1375 B.C.), and over priestly opposition, enforced the religion of the one God, Aton, a name which may have lived on in the Hebrew Adonai, Lord. Aton would suffer no images, and the disc of the sun was his only symbol. Amenhotep, who with the new cult changed his name to Ikhnaton, also abolished the cult of the dead with all its magical rites. Yet Aton's cult was short-lived. The kingly reformer died in 1358 B.C., and soon afterwards Aton was overthrown, having never gained popularity among a people so fond of the sculptured image.[3]

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[3] *Op. cit.*, New York, Pantheon, 1948, p. 50.

To what extent the literature of this period entered into the thought of the Israelites in Egypt can only be determined by reading Ikhnaton's hymn and comparing it with the 104th Psalm, and some of the Proverbs. So similar are they that one cannot help but wonder if the hymn of the Egyptian king was memorized by the Israelite captives and passed down generation after generation until the days of David (or the poet of the Psalms). We might also ask ourselves if it was likely that Moses, in the royal household, would learn the story of Ikhnaton and hear his hymn recited. Whether he did or not, we are not wrong in thinking his idea of one God was not original with him. Let us consider the following comments of James H. Breasted, the eminent Egyptologist:

> Among the fragments of the Aton faith which have survived in these tombs are two hymns to Aton, the longer and finer of which is worthy of being known in modern literature. It was probably written by the king himself. . . . The arrangement of the subject matter [is] especially striking because it is identical with that in Psalm civ. of the Old Testament, which is many centuries later.

Here are some excerpts from the Hymn to Aton:

> Bright is the earth when thou risest in the horizon.
> When thou shinest as Aton by day
> Thou drivest away the darkness.
>
> All cattle rest upon their pasturage,
> The trees and the plants flourish,
> The birds flutter in their marshes,
> Their wings uplifted in adoration to thee.
> All the sheep dance upon their feet,
> All winged things fly,
> They live when thou hast shone upon them.
>
> How manifold are thy works!
> They are hidden from before (us).[4]

The scholars do not agree about the date of the Exodus. On the basis of archaeological evidence, Dr. Yadin holds that the tribes were already in Palestine by 1300. Dr. Pfeiffer, Dr. Sidney Smith and others consider 1200 B.C. as a reasonable date for the entry of Joshua into Palestine.

If the reader thinks we labor these points unduly, we might remind him that they are the subject of intense controversy, and upon further research, there may be startling discoveries that may surprise us all. Why these should not be submitted to keen examination is not stated. The old reply that the Pentateuch was "Holy Scripture" and "inspired by God" no longer satisfies the student of inquiring mind. Indeed, some go so far as to say that there is no historical problem upon which a taboo may be placed.

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[4] "Ikhnaton," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed., XII, 78-9.

There are so many seemingly contradictory statements in Exodus that the scholars find it hard to reconcile them. Take, for example, what are called the commandments. One version has it that they were written by Moses (Exod. 24:4), but in verse 12 we read:

> And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written. . . .

For an explanation of this and other peculiar contradictions the inquirer might turn to the article on the Book of Exodus in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*.[5] Here in short compass the student will find an analysis, which gives us the latest explanation of the different versions. It is set forth that one was written by commentators designated as J (Jehovah, Yahweh) and the other by E (Elohim), and are merely different ways of expressing the same thought.

The astonishing thing about the narratives in Exodus is that, after six or eight centuries—perhaps more—we are given in precise detail so much that we easily imagine that it all happened as it is set forth. Folklore was never so vivid as it is described in the scenes that took place on Sinai. The movement of the people toward a boundary and no further is a realistic touch. Notwithstanding the differences in the narrative of the particular author of the commandments, they stand as a code for all the peoples of the earth, and it is not the fault of Yahweh or Elohim, or indeed Moses, that the people promised to obey and did not keep their pledge. Men were men then, as they are now, and the followers of Moses were not the only "stiff-necked" people who made good resolutions and did not keep them.

Take, for example, two of the commandments: "Thou shalt not kill" and "Thou shalt not steal." Alas, killing and stealing were commanded and carried out many times before the tribes were settled in Canaan and district. Indeed, a species of genocide was carried out with ruthless severity, and foes were not only ravished but their belongings were taken from them wholesale. As we shall see when we come to the campaigns of Joshua, after the death of Moses, the Promised Land had to be soaked with blood before the settlement could take place.

Many years ago, during the promising days of the Brotherhood Movement in England, before the First World War, men who had deserted the churches (many had attended Bible classes held by the different denominations) asked certain questions about the inconsistencies of Holy Writ. Their pastors gave no replies that would satisfy them. Yet, the vast majority who attended the meetings on Sunday afternoons held firmly to the belief of their fathers that the Bible was the Book of Books. Truly, it was that, and so much more, for men designated a fluent person of their class as one who spoke "Bible English." Now think of how much more we know that substantiates many of the stories in Exodus, thanks to the findings of the archaeologists.

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[5] Written by Prof. J. F. Stenning, 14th ed., VIII, 970-1.

Another question that puzzled conscientious Bible students in the Brotherhood Movement was: "Why did Moses break the stones upon which the commandments were written?" The usual answer was, "He did so in his anger at the people's reversion to idolatry." However, this was not a satisfactory reply. Strangely enough, some of them were satisfied with the explanation that he could not, with an easy conscience, kill the backsliders unless he broke the law. Perhaps these men were simple minded enough to go straight to the heart of the problem of killing and realized that martial law is no law and that, when war is declared, the laws of peace are broken by those whose duty it is to preserve them. The simple mind is sometimes subtle; at other times, incisive, and goes directly to the core of the problem. But that was the day when Tolstoy's tracts were read by thousands. "A Great Iniquity," written in 1905 and published by *The Times* (London), had an enormous circulation, and perhaps if it had not been for the First World War, life might have been more secure and brighter for the millions.

Nearing the end of the journey of the long trek through the wilderness, in which they spent forty years, Moses and his people came near to "the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho." And there he called his people together. No leader of a people of whom we have record, no statesman rallying a people to prepare for war denounced his hearers with words of such severity as he used. He told them:

> They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation (Deut. 32:5).

and

> . . . I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith (Deut. 32:20).

Using such diatribe seems to us a strange way to fortify a people called upon to invade the land of a foe. But Moses was no politician. He did not depend upon their vote for the exercise of his power over them. Perhaps that makes all the difference between candor and false praise. To tell a people what Yahweh would do to them if they failed in their duties was perhaps sufficient to assure them that only determined courage could gain the reward of a land flowing with milk and honey.

Upon Joshua he bequeathed the command over the people, and by the order of Yahweh he went to Nebo, there to view Canaan and the land in which the tribes were to settle, and in which he was not to place foot, for he had offended Yahweh. Having viewed the lands beyond Jericho from the summit of Nebo, he died, one hundred and twenty years old.

CHAPTER XII

THE MOSES-JETHRO STORY

After Moses fled from Egypt and sought refuge in the land of Midian, there are gaps in the story that perplex us. Our curiosity is pricked because we realize we have reached a series of episodes in his life that are of inestimable value to a proper understanding of his mission to return to Egypt and take his people to the Promised Land.

He fled east to the land of Midian, met there the daughters of Jethro, a shepherd-priest, at a well where they were drawing water for the sheep. Some shepherds interfered with their work, and we gather that they wished to take the water from the girls to supply their own flocks. Moses comes to the assistance of the maids, and when they return to their father, they tell him that an "Egyptian" came to their rescue and drove the molesting shepherds away.

On hearing this, Jethro sends for Moses and offers him hospitality. He also gives him employment tending sheep, curiously enough. He must have been deeply impressed with Moses, for he gave him one of his daughters, Zipporah by name. To this marriage were born two sons, Gershom and Eliezer.

Why did the girls think he was an Egyptian? It is not likely that they would know the language of the Pharaoh. The garments of Moses, however, would tell them of the land where such were worn. This is a story that opens up much speculation, and it is a pity it is compressed in short compass and leaves us wondering why Moses chose to escape to Midian, a long distance from the Nile delta. It may have been selected by the editors because of the drama that was to take place at Mount Horeb (Sinai). There are questions raised by this tale that are not revealed in the story itself.

Here again we should like to have more information about the language problems. Jethro and his family seemed to have no difficulty in conversing with Moses, but in what tongue? It could not be in Hebrew, for Moses was brought up in the royal Egyptian household. Are we then to suppose that the instructions of Yahweh were given to his champion in Hebrew?

It was here at Horeb (or Sinai) that Yahweh appeared to Moses and instructed him concerning the methods to be adopted in dealing with Pharaoh for the release of the Israelites. At this meeting the name of Aaron appears for the first time, and to our surprise, we are told that he is the brother of Moses. How he escaped, in childhood, the death penalty of the edict of the cruel Pharaoh is not explained. But the compilers, perhaps realizing that his name had not been introduced while Moses was in Egypt, decided that he was an elder brother, and thus being no babe when the edict was issued, he escaped the death penalty.

Jethro, the shepherd who was also a high priest, must have conversed freely with the stranger, who was recognized by the girls as an "Egyptian." Is it justifiable for us to assume that the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter was a man of one tongue? It would seem that such an idea does not fit the story, nor is it likely that he spoke Hebrew. Yet, he has no difficulty in understanding Aaron, his brother.

Many of the confusions in Exodus arise from the different traditions that have been combined. For instance, Aaron and Miriam were unknown to J, and Jethro (Hobab) is given as both father-in-law and brother-in-law of Moses. The place names, also, are still the subject of much debate. Most scholars now hold that the Israelites spent the largest part of the exodus at Kadesh and not at Sinai (or Horeb). The chaos of the Kadesh-Sinai sections of the Pentateuch is still being unraveled.

The essay on Moses in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*[1] gives us a remarkable survey of the background of the tribe of Jethro. It is written by The Reverend T. K. Cheyne, D.D., Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford and formerly Fellow of Balliol College. It is shown that Yahweh was the tribal god of the Midianites or Kenites (or Misrites) and that these people gathered for sacrifices at their sacred mount in the vicinity of Kadesh. It was in a burning bush on the mountain of God that Yahweh revealed himself to Moses (Exod. 3:4).

If we accept Exodus 18 that Yahweh was the god of Jethro's tribe, the language problem becomes more complicated still. For we cannot imagine that Moses knew any other language but Egyptian. However, a mystical solution of this quandary may be suggested. In the history of mystics, pagan and Christian, there are many instances of such phrases as "a voice within me spoke." Many interpreters took this to mean that the voice was not that of the individual making the statement, but of a higher, supernatural power inspiring the soul. If this be tenable as a solution, would it be reasonable to believe or imagine that, in the thought of a mystic, he considered himself possessed of a higher power? Such an idea would lead us to the unorthodox assumption that Moses was Yahweh, but individualized him as a separate person, to impress the Israelites that a god fathered them and cared for their future. Perhaps such notions can be carried to excess, but the language question remains to be explained.

In what medium were these proto-Deuteronomic stories passed down to the Israelites? There could be only two ways they could live in their minds: one was oral and the other written. It is the still undecided controversies of the scholars concerning this problem which bring these questions to the fore. It is in no hypercritical mood that we seek information, for we know that Deuteronomy did not become known as a Book until 621 B.C. Is it likely that Yahweh, the god of the Midianites or Kenites, was familiar with the Egyptian or the Hebrew tongue?

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[1] *Loc. cit.*, III, 3207-09, sec. 4, 5 and 6.

The story of the Israelites is one of the most remarkable examples of a religious development which has survived from a cult ritual. The captivity in Egypt lasted four hundred years. The man who came to the rescue of the people was an Egyptian by reading and education, although born of Levite parents. After the escape from the land of the Pharaohs, he and his followers spent forty years in the desert. Yet, their language and the history of their progenitors was fresh in their minds.

After studying the expert scholars, we are left with Aaron as the character who was free in Egypt to speak the language of the captives and to remind them of the race from which they sprang. But this does not help us to a solution of the problem, for Yahweh was the god of the Midianites or Kenites before Moses met Jethro. To keep a language alive during four hundred years in a foreign land, when the people who spoke it were condemned to serfdom, is a record for which there is no parallel.

In America it is not strange to hear of children of foreign parents who cannot speak their father's tongue. I have met several Italian families who know not the tongue spoken by the father. A farmer I knew, born in the Middle West, was the son of a Pole, but neither he nor his children knew how to frame a sentence in Polish. And they boasted of it. Editors of weekly papers printed in a foreign tongue frequently complain of the dearth of subscribers and readers; and this takes place in a country which Israel Zangwill called the "melting pot." Indeed, it has often been remarked that a man or woman who speaks the foreign language of his or her parents cannot be regarded as being "a good American."

Thus, many mysteries concerning the captivity still perplex the minds of scholars—the survival of the speech of Abraham and Jacob, the ritual of the gods they worshiped, and the history of their wanderings before the the settlement in Goshen.

Nearly all of the scholars are conscious of the difficulties inherent in the story of the first patriarch. Take, for example, the identity of Abraham, as it is revealed to us in Genesis. In the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Dr. F. M. T. Böhl writes as follows:

> . . . Some would suppose that the figure of Abraham owes its origin merely to the imagination of the poet; or that Abraham is merely a personification of the people who derived themselves from him, and that the sagas and legends concerning him and other patriarchs are only a reflection of later tribal history. According to other scholars, the heroic figure of Abraham is based on a Canaanite god who was worshipped in the holy trees of Shechem and Hebron. . . .[2]

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[2] *Loc. cit.*, "Abraham" (14th ed.), I, 59-60.

This statement does not make our task easier to solve. Indeed, it complicates it, for it opens up another avenue to search for the reason why the tribe of Midian has been associated with the main line of the Israelites. Keturah was Abraham's second wife (also called a concubine by some of the critics), and one of their sons was called Midian (Gen. 25:2). All the sons of the concubines were sent into the east country (Gen. 25:6). "And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac," who was his son by Sarah. Keturah's sons are all subsidiary characters. It is Isaac who is the heir and the dominant factor in the genealogy. Indeed, the main thread we trace in Genesis and Exodus, all the way down to the time of the release of the captives in Egypt by Moses, carries the drama of the fate of Israel to the banks of the river Jordan.

The unreality found by some of the scholars in the story of Abraham, his origin and his tribe, to say nothing of his cult, is not present to the same extent in that of Jacob. The latter was one of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 25:20-26). There are passages concerning Jacob's life that smack of reality, and they are written in a way that makes us think they were the firmest, the most durable biographical memories that the poets of Israel passed on from generation to generation. The Midianite kinship with Israel seems to be in the female branch, descended from Abraham by Keturah. Are we, then, justified in assuming that Yahweh was for Israel an adoptive deity? The critics are divided in their arguments.

When we consider the ages of the three characters, an idea comes to us of long periods through which oral history survived. Abraham was 175 years old; Isaac lived 180 years; and Jacob was 147 when he died. But this is not all. How many years passed in the land of Goshen before the Israelites were reduced to serfs? They were in captivity for about four hundred years. This covers a long period (before registers of births, deaths and marriages were kept by nomad tribes). Still, we know now from the work of the archaeologists that folklore, simply because it is not written, is not to be despised. It may often contain a historical kernel worth investigation. There have been so many substantiations of the bases of what were called myths, particularly those the rationalists found in Exodus, that we have learned it is unwise to jump to conclusions on these matters or, with a shrug of the shoulders, reject outright a folklore tale.

There is another line of approach, which must be considered in connection with Abraham and the origin of his people. It takes us far afield, but it is certainly worth noting. For it brings an Aramean color to the story, if indeed it does not show an Aramean influence. In the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, Dr. Hermann Guthe, Professor of Old Testament Exegesis, Leipsig, writing on "Israel," examines early data found in Genesis, which throws a light upon Israel that will remain in our minds until we reach Galilee and Nazareth. He says:

> . . . The pastoral tribes that had their abode [in the wilderness lying S. and E. of Palestine], in as far as they can be reckoned as ancestors of Israel, belonged to the North Semitic stock, probably to the Aramaean group.
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> This, at least, is the assertion of Israel's own later tradition, when (1) in the patriarchal histories it uniformly represents its nearest kinsmen of *pure* blood as being Aramaeans (Gen. 24: 29 ff.), and (2) in the liturgical formula preserved in Dt. 26:5 it designates its ancestor as a "wandering Aramaean." The name "Hebrew," far from contradicting this, actually confirms it. . . . What we now call Hebrew is precisely the language of Canaan, which makes its appearance in the Amarna tablets as early as 1400 B.C.; and the oldest Aramaic with which we are as yet acquainted approaches the Hebrew of the land of Canaan very closely; the difference is one only of dialect. It may be conjectured that the language of the Bedouins of that period, on the borders of the cultivated territory of Syria, was very similar to this Old Aramaic. If some of their clans or tribes migrated into Canaan and settled there, the exchange, as far as language is concerened, was thus only one of dialect.[3]

Professor S. A. Cook, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge 1932-38, in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, also links the " 'sons' of Jacob" with Aramean mothers and says that "certain of the tribes must have contained some element of Aramean blood" (I Chron. 7:14).

Jacob himself had taken his two wives (Leah and Rachel) from the "Aramean tribe from which his ancestry had sprung." Says Professor Cook: "The close relation between Jacob and the Arameans confirms the view that some of the tribes of Israel were partly of Aramean origin."[4]

This interesting relationship recalls another earlier one between the Kenites and the Israelites. Dr. W. F. Albright believes "it is probable that the Kenites of the Bible, with a name derived from qain, 'smith' " might have been smiths or tinkers who followed the trade routes. He points out that "It can scarcely be accidental that Cain's descendant Lamech had three sons, each of whom is credited with originating one of the three occupational specialties of this form of society: tents and herds, musical instruments, copper and iron working. . . . There is some reason for thinking that the ancestral Hebrews were in part, at least, composed of groups belonging to the same [Kenites] or related types."[5]

Cain is generally regarded as the ancestor of the Kenites (Pfeiffer et al.), but the details regarding his descendants are at variance. Further, we learn how much the followers of Moses were indebted to Jethro's people, not only for the god they adopted in worship, but for instruction in administration and conduct. It was Jethro who advised him to name judges to deal with economic and social frictions that arose among his people. Professor T. K. Cheyne, in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, deals with this part of the subject in a most interesting manner. He says:

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[3] *Loc. cit.*, II, 2218.

[4] *Ency. Brit.* (14th ed.), "Jacob," XII, 856-7.

[5] *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, 1942, pp. 98-9.

> It was pointed out above that in the Song of Deborah the Musrites, with whom the Kenites were closely linked, are "cursed" for not coming to the help of Yahweh's worshippers the Israelites (Judg. 5:23). This confirms a view which has long been considered critically probable that the Kenites and the Israelites were conscious of the identity of their early religion, and that the Kenites were indirectly at least the teachers of the Israelites. . . . The progress of critical study of the documents since 1872 has in fact added considerably to the probability of this view. . . .[6]

I leave it to the student to work out an explanation of all this that makes sense. He need not be afraid of vitiating the main points of the story, which begins with the move of Jacob and his people to the delta of the Nile, as a result of the drought. The framework of that narrative has many of the elements of history in it, and most of the scholars accept it without hesitation. We know such things are quite possible. Indeed, we not only have many records of them happening to peoples in Asia, but in Europe also. For food is the magnet of migration.

Perhaps the student may say he has no time to undertake such a task as I have suggested and plead that the great scholars are not in agreement on all points. Nevertheless, he will recognize that no other book has ever opened up so much speculation as the Old Testament. Someone said everything was in the Bible. Certainly there has never been put together in one volume such fascinating folklore stories, religious myths, and characters that have survived all the changes of rituals and states for thousands of years; nor do we find in any other work of ancient history such a code of life for all peoples, of all climes, that can compare with the one attributed to Moses.

Dr. Edward Robertson, who was professor of Semitic Languages and Literatures in the University of Manchester when the exhibition of Jewish Books was opened in Manchester Central Public Library in April 1938, made the following cogent remarks:

> . . . Although in origin (the Old Testament) is a Jewish book, it has obviously a universal appeal, for all mankind brought into contact with it has found in it a fountain of living water. To be the source of religious ideals for millions, to give impulse and direction to the religious and cultural progress of mankind is a tremendous power to find centred in one small book.[7]

It is impossible to imagine what Europe would have been like without the cultural splendors of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The birth of what we call the Middle Ages was almost akin to a new creation. It was then the Cathedral builders gave to Europe the institutions that afterwards became universities, and everything that man has prized in religion, science and art came from them. And the root and inspiration of all we now cherish was found in, and drawn from, the Book of Books, the Bible.

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[6] *Loc. cit.*, "Kenites," II, 2658-9.

[7] *The Old Testament Problem*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1950, p. 3.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PENTATEUCH

When Moses chose Yahweh, the god of the Midian Kenites, he had not yet been counselled to return to Egypt and liberate the captives. Now we are faced with the question: what religious tie, if any, held Moses so long in Egypt? He lived at least a century after the regime of Ikhnaton came to an end, and if he knew of those reforms, it must have been the hearsay that lodged in his mind. In the period before Moses fled to Midian, we assume that the old faith of Amen-Re had been re-established, and that, if Moses had a god, it was the one worshiped in Egypt during his lifetime. The importance of this problem will become apparent as we proceed in this matter of the selection of Yahweh, who became the god of the Israelites. Pertinent questions might also be asked about the god of Abraham and the god who baptized Jacob Israel. Who were they?

We learn nothing of Yahweh in the Old Testament until we meet Jethro, and it is not to be supposed that the dominion of the god extended as far as Ur. Yahweh is not mentioned in the theogony of the Sumerians, although we do know that the name occurs in the Ras Shamra texts, indicating that it was known on the Phoenician coast and in Syria in the fourteenth century B.C. The gaps in this part of the history of Abraham and Jacob challenge the imagination. One critic goes so far as to say that they are deliberate omissions. I do not think so.

How is it possible to fill the gaps that yawn in that period between the time when Abraham left Ur and the time when Moses adopted the god of the Midian Kenites? Such a task would put a strain upon the most vivid imagination. But even if they could be filled, it would not clear up the confusion of ideas and apparent contradictions that have arisen from the usage, in our Pentateuch, of the term God with a capital "G."

The third chapter of Exodus is perhaps one of the most perplexing that confronts the scholar-critic. The ubiquity of Yahweh is incomprehensible for a tribal god. He hears the cry of the captives who are in Egypt, and he is at the same time the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exod. 3:6). Moses seems to be quite ignorant of his power until he takes the sheep of Jethro to the mountain, where he is confronted with the burning bush (Exod. 3:2). It is extraordinary how the editors hundreds of years after this event were able to record it as if it had been described upon a stone or papyrus that had weathered the storms of long centuries.

Here it might be well to give a word of explanation about the authorship of the Pentateuch. Robert H. Pfeiffer, one of the most erudite scholars on this subject, writes as follows:

> The canonization of the Deuteronomy in 621 B.C. marks the beginning of a process rather than its end. . . . The great national epic, including the old sources from Genesis to Samuel, had been edited in 650 B.C. . . .
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> . . . The Priestly Code was added about 450 B.C. and after the incorporation of other material the entire Pentateuch, ending with the death of Moses, was edited and separated from Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Soon (about 400 B.C.) the Pentateuch alone was canonized as inspired Scripture. . . . Translated into Greek (the Septuagint) in 250 B.C., the Pentateuch was soon read regularly in the synagogues, erected for this very purpose, and hence could never again be supplemented with new layers of legislation.[1]

We cannot ignore folklore stories simply because we do not know how they have been passed down from generation to generation, by tongue instead of by script. When we consider the backslidings of a "stiff-necked people," which happened so often in their history before the days of Isaiah and Amos, we marvel at the tenacity of a religious tradition. Once embedded in the mind, it was there to take root forever. Nevertheless, we must admit that much of the controversy during the last half of the nineteenth century came about because of the way in which the stories are told and the use of the term "God" spelled with a capital "G"—that is, God the Creator of the universe and all that therein is. This controversy is not yet stilled. Books have been published in recent years, which raise the identical questions that perplexed the minds of atheists and agnostics three generations ago.

The scholars are not agreed upon all points concerning the manner in which the early stories came down to the teachers in the synagogues. Dr. Pfeiffer has this to say:

> At least since the Pentateuch was canonized in 400 B.C. it was firmly believed that Moses (who died about 1225 B.C.) was its author. "Moses received Torah (Law) from Sinai and delivered it to Joshua, and Joshua to the Elders, and the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets delivered it to the Men of the Great Synagogue" (*Sayings of the Fathers*, about A.D. 200). Such was the general opinion in Judaism and in early Christianity.
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> In Judaism, the first misgivings as to the Mosaic authorship appear about A.D. 500, when the Talmud declared that Joshua was the author of the last eight verses of Deuteronomy (the account of the death of Moses). During the Middle Ages, some Jewish scholars discovered in the Pentateuch certain expressions obviously pointing to a time long after the death of Moses. . . .
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> The results of the Biblical investigations until the end of the seven-

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[1] *The Books of the Old Testament*, New York, Harper, 1957, pp. 14-15.

> teenth century had been chiefly negative; it was noticed that the Pentateuch contained numerous statements that Moses could not have written, since they obviously belonged to a later period; but, although it was surmised that the Torah was compiled out of different documents, no hint for their identification was found.[2]

Some acknowledge Ezra not only as the restorer of the law but as the founder of the method of passing the tradition of the law on from father to son, generation after generation. However, as Ezra did not appear upon the scene until after the return from Babylon, "there is very strong reason," according to Charles C. Torrey, "for the conclusion that the character of Ezra was created by the Chronicler (3rd century B.C.)."[3] He is supposed to have been an emissary of Artaxerxes (I or II?) and held a decree from the king which gave him power in Judea.

The article on "Hebrew Literature" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* tells us:

> . . . According to Jewish teaching Moses received on Mount Sinai not only the written Law as set down in the Pentateuch, but also the Oral Law, which was transmitted to the 70 elders and through them by a "chain of tradition" to succeeding ages. . . . The line is traced through biblical teachers to Ezra, the first of the Sōpherīm or scribes, who handed on the charge to the "men of the Great Synagogue," a much-discussed term for a body or succession of teachers inaugurated by Ezra. . . .[4]

This raises the question of whether the worship of Yahweh was abandoned and a wholly new form of worship inaugurated. Isaiah and Amos, who worshiped God the Creator of all, lived three hundred years before Ezra returned to Jerusalem, and we have no doubt about the religious creed of Nehemiah, who was governor of Jerusalem about the time of Ezra's return there.

Were the teachers in the synagogue (who gave the people the tradition) informed of the incidents in the third chapter of Exodus? Was the name of the tribal god of the Midian Kenites preserved? Or was it dropped without a reason given for doing so? We get no clue on this point when we read the Scriptures. This is another complicated matter upon which the scholars are not in agreement, and some of the critics have wondered how later teachings can be reconciled with the stories told in Exodus.

I think it is possible to take the Law as it stands, no matter who was the lawgiver. It is clear and reasonable in all its commands. For this the name of Moses stands unshakable. To my mind he was the author of the Law and the genius who devised the ways and means for men to live in harmony, upon a basis of justice.

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[3] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed., IX, 14.

[4] *Loc. cit.*, XI, 357.

The incident of the burning bush also raises the perplexing question of the language used by Yahweh later in his instructions for the liberation of the captives. We have no reason to imagine that Moses could then speak any tongue other than Egyptian. Yet, he was familiar enough with the one used by the god to enter into conversation with him. This is remarkable—but not unusually so—for we are dealing with folklore, and stranger things than language are encountered in the myths of people.

Perhaps the student who has been bewildered by this matter will gain some enlightenment on the etymology of the term Hebrew from Dr. G. R. Driver's illuminating article on "Hebrew Language" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica:*

> In the Old Testament, Hebrew is called "the lip of Canaan," or "Jewish"; the later Jews designated it "the sacred tongue"; the term "Hebrew" was coined by the Rabbis of Palestine. The English name comes from the Greek "Hebrew," whose adverb "in Hebrew," is applied to Biblical Hebrew in the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus (*c.* 130 B.C.); this adjective is derived from the Aramaic "Hebrew."
>
> . . . The earliest Hebrew examples [of the Semitic alphabet] occur on the Calendar from Gezer (*c.* 8th century B.C.) and on the inscription in the Pool of Siloam (*c.* 700 B.C.). . . . The transition to the "square script" was effected first in Aramaic and later in Hebrew, undoubtedly in consequence of the growing influence of Aramaic immediately before the Christian era. It was called the "Assyrian script" on the assumption that it was the hand of the Eastern Arameans, which the Jews adopted about the 5th century B.C. . . . There are signs that [the alphabet which numbered 22 letters] was not definitely fixed even when the Greek version of the Old Testament was made. . . .[5]

How can we reconcile the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with the Yahweh of Moses? Who had instructed Abraham to leave Ur and go to the Promised Land, seven or eight hundred years before Moses made the acquaintance of the god of the Midian Kenites? The only conclusion we can draw is that several editors, at a very much later date, using different documents with varying accounts of the patriarchal stories, compiled the Pentateuch with its contradictory versions. Perhaps this problem will always be one for the literary critics and remain outside the bounds of historical treatment.

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[5] *Loc. cit.*, XI, 354.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ECONOMICS OF MOSES

We wonder how the stories of the marvels described in the Pentateuch were preserved. No longer do we disdain all tradition. So much of it has been found to have substance that we now reserve our judgment and wait. For the student it is best to cultivate patience and preserve a humble spirit. There is much more for us to learn, and we know not when the archaeologist will announce discoveries that will force us to revise our present notions. Keep in mind that man is the legend maker, and they are as necessary for his spiritual satisfaction as bread is for the body. Even today, with all our scientific formulae, man is still weaving legends. Indeed, he is as prone to do this now as he was at the time when Montaigne said "he is forever making gods but cannot make a worm."

Recently *The Times* (London) published pictures of primitive paintings found in caves in darkest Africa, the Tassili-n-Ajjer range in the Sahara desert. The caves and contents were discovered by the French ethnologist M. Henri Lhote.[1] One picture shows a "negro mask and white woman with the round head which is typical of many of the paintings." What is surprising about this find is the date. It is put at 6,000 years before this era, or more than 2,000 years before the birth of Moses.

In our quest for knowledge concerning the peoples of the time of Genesis and Exodus, the language they spoke, their method of writing, if they could do that on clay or papyri, we should be prepared for such unexpected finds as those announced in *The Times*. If they could draw 2300 years before Abraham left Ur, in that area now called the Sahara Desert, we might suppose that there were records in some form of the personages and events mentioned in the Pentateuch. But what became of them no one has discovered. Some scholars hold that the absence of documents on Palestinian sites is due to the perishable material used.

The tablets unearthed in Sumer are also collateral evidence that there might have been similar tablets for the patriarch and his family, which may yet be found. If they did exist and were taken to Babylon by the captives, we might infer that their absence means that they perished when Babylon fell. It is a perplexing problem and one that no one yet has attempted to solve.

There was only one Moses, and he was no shepherd. His "flock" followed at his heels. How he succeeded in welding the people who had been slaves in Egypt into a compact, disciplined body, for the command of Joshua, is not the least of the marvels of his career. For we are not wrong in thinking that those critics who object to the term Israelites given to the followers of Moses have reason to imagine that during hundreds of years of servitude, mixed marriages would produce many hybrid branches. No doubt the Hyksos left an indelible mark upon the people of Egypt during the long years of their rule (1720-1580 B.C.). And who would reject the idea that the Egyptian strain entered to a great extent into the captive communities? Hence, the reversions to the gods of the Nile kingdom during the long trek in the desert.

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[1] Nov. 28, 1957, p. 18.

However, it is the language question which makes us wonder how the language that was spoken by Moses and his followers was translated into Hebrew, the language which, according to some of the specialists, was the one in which the lost records were written.

We must be careful not to enter a blind alley in pursuing this subject, and we should realize that it does not by any means follow that an early people who could draw could also write. Writing betokens a very high level of early civilization. Our knowledge of this branch of the broad subject has been increased enormously during the past fifty years. Because it touches the matter of the language the people spoke, it is of vast historic value in our attempt to determine the immense problem of speech that Moses had to deal with.

The scholars, in general, agree on the common linguistic characteristics of the Semitic languages, which were in use in the region of Canaan, i.e. Palestine and part of Syria. Professor Albright believes that the Sinaitic inscription is a form of Canaanite alphabetic script, and dates the specimens at 1500 B.C. But the problem for us is to learn how the Israelites were taught to use the Hebrew tongue instead of the Egyptian. May this be attributed to Moses, or was it the office of Aaron? During forty years in the wilderness much progress in this direction might have been made, although the repeated backslidings of the captives indicated every time that not only in their gods but in the ornaments worn by the women, and in other respects also, they were Egyptian.

When we read again the song of Moses (Deut. 32 and 33), we cannot help but think that he was an unusually gifted clairvoyant, for he had a vision of the settlement of the tribes in the land that had been promised to Abraham and Jacob. He told the people of "the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob" (Deut. 33:4). How did he know that?

> Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew (Deut. 33:28).

Then to assure them of the inheritance, he told the people the Lord said:

> . . . This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither (Deut. 34:4).

That Moses, having spent his life in Egypt until the time the Exodus began, should have known where the Land of Canaan lay and how to direct his people for forty years to a point within sight of Jericho confounds the imagination.

The scholars and theologians part company in their respective explanations of some of the marvels attributed to Yahweh, who informed the human instrument of his will in precise terms. What Moses did not know, Yahweh did. There are so many differences of opinion concerning these matters that it would take several pages to present the interpretations of the leading American and British authors who have devoted their lives to the study of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, the scholars are generally agreed that the achievement of Moses, in leading perhaps the most heterogeneous horde that ever moved together, from the Nile delta to the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula, and then east to the Persian Gulf and north to Kadesh and finally Mt. Nebo, stands as a unique feat.

For one who had never been anywhere near Canaan, the vision of Moses was that of a seer. We assume that he knew nothing of topography and, although he might have heard when he was in Egypt something about its natural resources, he could scarcely have described it as if he had thoroughly explored it. Here again we might record his views of the utopia of good things his people were to find when they crossed over Jordan:

> For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;
>
> A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;
>
> A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.
>
> When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee (Deut. 8:7-10).

It seems incredible that a stranger could describe a land in terms employed by an inhabitant. However, there is this to be considered: perhaps Abraham and Jacob, or their heirs, had laid down a tradition of their knowledge of Canaan as it was when spared by drought. This may be one explanation, but if we accept it, we give to oral tradition an accuracy that is rare.

A close reading of Deuteronomy impresses me with the idea that Moses was the first fundamental economist. Indeed, I cannot understand why a practical work on the economics of the Book of Deuteronomy has not been attempted. It would not be difficult for an industrious student, knowing the proper definitions of economic terms, to give us a book that would be of abiding interest. Take for example chapter 10, verse 14, which declares: "The heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is."

The economic significance of this has not been fully realized by the theologians, probably because it savors of a materialism to be abhorred in spiritual affairs. Still, the earth is the Lord's—that is, the Creator's—and it cannot belong to man. Indeed, we shall see that man cannot own what is created; he can only use it for the products that will satisfy his desires and needs for well-being. Moses makes that perfectly plain in Deuteronomy 8:17-18:

> And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.
>
> But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

So thoroughly fundamental is this statement that Moses selects the proper economic term for the produce of labor—wealth. In order that the producers may enjoy the land allotted to them, he lays it down: "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark" (Deut. 19:14). The violation of such a law is mentioned in the curse chapter: "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark" (Deut. 27:17).

One of the laws Moses imposed upon the people before they entered Canaan was that of making provision for the House of Levi. The tenth, or tithe, of the produce that should be yielded to the priests has a special significance, as stated in Exodus. It is so set forth that there should be no doubt about what was intended. How the misunderstanding has arisen about this term, and its application, can only be explained by assuming that the commentators have confused it with tribute or taxation; for many of them, in their essays, regard its origin as a political imposition levied by a king. This is quite contrary to the Mosaic tithe, for there was no king in Israel until Saul was chosen to rule three and a half centuries later.

In Exodus we learn: "The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord thy God" (34:26). This means that they are grants to Yahweh, and so precise is the declaration of Moses that there should be no doubt about the reason why it was laid down as a law. We read in Deuteronomy 18:1: "The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel."

This means they were landless, and consequently they did not till the earth, nor breed sheep or cattle. They were non-producers. Their service to the tribe was that of priests. The share they were to receive is described in detail:

> And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw.
>
> The firstfruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him (Deut. 18:3-4).

Those who regard this offering as tribute or taxation surely have in mind political levies. They fail to see that there was no political body in Israel at that time. It was to be a kingdom of priests. And the word "tithe," or tenth, may perhaps stand for economic rent paid in goods—cattle, corn, oil and other things. Instead of paying rent to a landlord for the land—that is, apart from improvements, cultivation and crops—they paid it to the priests. It was a non-political, non-taxable asset of the House of Levi.

Moses had more economic sense of the difference between land and the farms on it than the landlords of England or America. The value of what is created differs fundamentally from the produce that is raised upon it. Here we may hark back to Moses' understanding of the term wealth. The writers on this subject, who have contributed essays to the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* and other encyclopaedias seem to have missed the significance of this law imposed by Moses, because they confuse it with tribute and taxation, which are political penalties.

When we deal with the period of the kings, we shall have more to say about the tithe and how it was twisted into a system of extortion. I think it is better if we keep our minds clear of systems of the taxation of wealth, which is really legal theft. We shall see that Moses, the economist, conceived the settlement of a pastoral people enjoying life under Judges and priests only. In Israel there were to be no such anomalies as wage slaves toiling for a political government.

Before World War I, at a Brotherhood meeting in England, a working miner pointed out, in an address he made, a peculiar contradiction that needed some clarification. He referred to:

> The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law (Deut. 29:29).

Yet, in another place, Moses had referred to "a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass" (8:9).

The speaker's explanation of this seeming contradiction made it plain that the ore was often seen lying upon the surface and was, therefore, not included in the "hidden things." This seemed to satisfy his audience, for he was a miner speaking to miners, who composed perhaps half the men present at the meeting.

What an astonishing revelation of sound economic sense flashes from the verses of Deuteronomy! To make a people secure in their holdings was a safeguard against land monopoly. Moses even went so far as to warn them against the evils of bribery and corruption. He said:

> Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.
>
> That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee (Deut. 16:19-20).

It sounds almost modern, for many of our historians have shown that the gifts of the State to individuals are the root of the system of privilege.

Let these instances of the wisdom of Moses suffice for the present. Perhaps the counsel given by his father-in-law, Jethro, to nominate judges over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens (Exod. 18:21) was the first non-political step to safeguard the rights of litigants. In this, politicians are counted out. No courts are required in which to adjudicate man-made laws. Israel was to be a kingdom of priests. There was no provision for thrones and the panoply of the State.

The laws of Moses form a perfect constitution for a non-political State. It is hard for us to convince ourselves that the people he had led from Egypt to Sinai knew the value of the counsel he gave to them. There is something so modern in his sayings that we might easily turn to some of the economists of the nineteenth century and find almost a repetition of his words. Yet, his people said they would obey. Before he left them, he gave them a solemn warning:

> I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live (Deut. 30:19).

The philosopher might in grave tones say: "Would that the people of this day take counsel from Moses!" He would reflect on the great empires of the past; Egypt chose death, so did Greece, so did Persia, so did Rome. Is there time for us, in this scientific age, to take heed and choose life?

CHAPTER XV

JOSHUA

From the accounts that we have read about the sojourns of Abraham and Jacob in Canaan, we do not find the inhabitants treating them as trespassers. Indeed, the narrative shows several instances of friendliness. When that section of land lying between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean was divided between Abraham and Lot, the inhabitants made no protest, a circumstance rare in the annals of territorial aggrandizement. They must have been a meek people to tolerate such a proceeding.

And who were these peoples? In Genesis 15:19-21, Yahweh tells Abraham their names. There are ten nations, but we are not informed whether they were allied for any purpose. If they were, they must have formed the first League of Nations. Think of the area they occupied. Yahweh told Abraham, "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18). We wonder if the seaboard strips of what we now call Palestine existed then as nations. In later history they appear not only as peoples of great importance, but in the case of the Philistines, they were a source of trouble to David.

We know of no other section of the earth that contained in early times so many different peoples. Dr. Noth tells us that the openness of the land to the south and east made possible not only small infiltrations but large-scale immigrations. Because it was a "transit area," it was "repeatedly involved in the intercourse and conflicts of the great powers of the ancient Orient."[1] How Canaan and his progeny had been able to withstand the pressure of invading forces from all sides, and raise such a formidable nation of descendants is a mystery. Yet, the land that bore his name survived all the years from his banishment to the days of the first battles of Joshua.

Before I deal with the campaigns of Joshua, it may be necessary to remind the reader that we are living in an age of investigation. Nearly every activity of man is now put under the microscope of scientists. Our colleges and universities have multiplied their departments of what is called knowledge to such an extent that more and more immense sums are being spent upon buildings, such as dormitories, lecture rooms and laboratories. What the men of the nineteenth century, the renowned thinkers who paid great heed to what was then called education, would think of us is a question that no one pretends to answer.

Specialization is now responsible for what Lord Lindsay called "the superficial ass.'' He knows one thing to which he devotes his time, for it is the business of his living. The latest reports we have of the lack of general knowledge are discouraging, to say the least. Dr. Robert Cook, in his book, *Human Fertility*, says we are in danger of breeding a generation of nit-wits,[2] and he bases his report upon statistics issued by the British and American governments. It is a sad state of affairs.

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[1] Martin Noth, *The History of Israel*, p. 14.

About a hundred years ago what was called Rationalism was rampant in England. Lecky, Tyndall, and Thomas Huxley—to mention only three esteemed thinkers—showered their literary and rhetorical arrows upon what were then considered to be ''myths.'' Indeed, these men went by the name of ''myth-busters,'' and the pastors of many denominations held them responsible for the great drift from the churches that began before the turn of the century.

I mention this because a generation after they had passed away, Lord Allenby, in command of the forces which operated in Palestine during the First World War, told John Garstang that his strategy was based upon what he knew of Joshua's campaigns. Here was an accomplished soldier informing one of the world's famous archaeologists of his knowledge of the invasion of Palestine by the Israelites. Such information as that would have bewildered such a man as Thomas Huxley, and yet he did not know how a cultured man could dispense with the Bible. In the list of books he considered necessary for an educated man, he placed the Bible first.

As for the work of the explorers in the Near East, from Thebes to the Black Sea, and the uncovering of cities by the archaeologists in that vast area, no rationalist of the time of Huxley would have believed it possible. Nevertheless, many of the feats accomplished by Joshua and his army exceed the bounds of our belief, and the incredible stories have caused not a few thinkers, even at this time, to overlook or ignore what is really historical in the narrative.

Therefore, we shall not hearken to the insistent ''whys'' and querulous ''wherefores'' that frequently make their appearance in these campaigns. I may refer to them incidentally—not with the intention of belittling their importance, but to mark, when necessary, the extraordinary assistance Joshua received from Yahweh.

When the mantle of commander-in-chief of the Israelites fell upon the shoulders of Joshua, after the death of Moses, he realized that he was faced with a Herculean task. The plan of campaign, but not its strategy, was known to him. The record of his great achievement in organizing an army of 40,000 men of a ''stiff-necked people'' is unique in military history, for they not only had to be drilled and armed, but fettled in muscle and brawn for the stupendous work they had to perform. It must have been an almost heartbreaking job for him to circumcise his army. We learn from Joshua 5:4-5:

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[2] *Cf.* Francis Neilson, *The Cultural Tradition and Other Essays*, New York, Schalkenbach, 1957, p. 2.

> And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt.
>
> Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.

From this we infer that only the circumcised could enter the Promised Land. But are we to accept the story as one pertaining to adult males? It says "even all the men of war." Such an operation upon men must have taken months to perform, for there were perhaps at least double that number of male children also to be circumcised.

When Joshua sent the two spies out to reconnoiter, he could not have known as much about the terrain over which he would travel and the obstacles he would meet as did Rahab, the harlot, who housed the two spies and let them escape from the agents of the king of Jericho. The story reads like the synopsis of a sensational novel, but its interest to us is that the woman in it was not only well informed but revealed a skill in double dealing that is rare even in Bible stories. Her report to the servant to the king of Jericho reads more like one told by a student of history than the woman of a brothel. But its prophetic intent is extraordinary:

> And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.
>
> For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed (Joshua 2:9-10).

In referring to the passage of the Red Sea, had she in mind the hazard of crossing the Jordan? Did this statement contain a hint of what would happen when Joshua's army would reach the river?

Yahweh commanded Joshua to order the priests to carry the ark of the covenant before the army towards the brink of the river. Then he did for Joshua what he had done for Moses. The description of the act is worth recording:

> And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)
>
> That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan:

> and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.
>
> And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan (Joshua 3:15-17).

Before the army reached the river's brink, Joshua knew the names and number of the tribes of peoples he had to fight. There were seven (Joshua 3:10). But Jericho had to fall before the hosts of these people were conquered.

Let us come immediately to the strategy of Joshua when the attack was made upon the city. The army marched round the walls seven days and drew no belligerent response from the besieged. Perhaps they were appalled at the strength of the foe, or the watchers on the towers saw the ark carried before the legions and the priests with "seven trumpets of rams' horns." Whatever the reason for their inaction, it cannot be said that they were inclined to fight. In Joshua 6:20 we learn:

> So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. . . .

This is the passage in the remarkable narrative of this one-sided battle that has given many a reader reason for rejecting the whole of it. Indeed, certain flippant critics regarded it as something of a joke, but today we know much more about what did happen, according to scientific investigators, than the people did in Huxley's time. Still, there is one difficulty in reasoning this out according to the knowledge of geologists, and that is whether there was one or two severe disturbances of nature: one or two earthquakes. It is now accepted by the archaeologists that the passage of the Jordan was possible owing to an earthquake that caused an enormous avalanche or subsidence of a cliff. But this took place some time before the walls of Jericho fell. If we pay close attention to the sequence of events as they are set down in Joshua 3:13 ff., 4:7, 18 ff., 6:20, we are convinced that the narrator is dealing with two separate earthquakes. But the strange thing about these severe shocks is that the armies of Joshua were not injured by them.

Professor John Garstang, who excavated the ruins of Jericho in 1930-36, sheds much light upon both stories: the crossing of the Jordan and the destruction of the walls. In *The Story of Jericho*, Professor Garstang says:

> These episodes are confirmed in all material particulars: the fallen walls have been laid bare, while the burning of demolished buildings is found to have been general and so conspicuous as to suggest a deliberate holocaust. . . .

> The most striking feature about Jericho is its situation in the Jordan Rift. This is part of the natural "fault" which runs from the Sea of Galilee down to the Dead Sea and beyond. . . .[3]

Garstang found pottery which he dated about 1400 B.C., and which he attributed to the period of Joshua. However, more recent investigations by Kathleen Kenyon give us the following particulars:

> . . . Since 1936, work on other sites has added greatly to our knowledge of the dating of pottery, so that by 1950 it had become apparent that revision might be necessary for some of the datings suggested by Professor Garstang. Moreover, archaeological technique is continuously evolving, as it should be in a live discipline, and it seemed that further excavation might help to settle some of the questions still in dispute, notably that of the date of the entry of the Israelites into Palestine. . . . Professor Garstang believed that he had identified the defences of the period. But additional evidence about the stratification makes it quite clear that these are to be dated to the Early Bronze Age.
>
> The excavation of Jericho, therefore, has thrown no light on the walls of Jericho of which the destruction is so vividly described in the Book of Joshua. . . . But as to what caused the walls to fall down flat, we have no factual evidence. We can guess that it was an earthquake, which the excavations have shown to have destroyed a number of the earlier walls, but this is only conjecture. . . .[4]

Let us try to picture this city of Jericho, now accepted by most of the scholars as "the oldest known town in the world." Garstang describes it thus:

> To the people of a barren land, where life was difficult, Jericho must have appeared at all times a haven of contentment. Shepherds who lived in the bleak hill country of Palestine and Moab might well look down with envy upon the walled town with its semi-tropical oasis. Travellers and merchants who were obliged to pass that way would be tempted to stop or to return with their families and belongings; for here was a land of palm-trees, fruit gardens and corn, where hard work was well rewarded and beneficent nature provided everything necessary for life and even more. Small wonder, then, that primitive man was attracted early to this site, and that through the ages successive migratory groups strove for its possession. . . .[5]

Miss Kenyon emphasizes the strategic position of Jericho in the ancient world:

> . . . It controlled one of the main routes, which traversed corresponding stream-cut clefts in the two walls of the valley, from the desert into

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[3] *Op. cit.*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1940, pp. 6, 7.

[4] *Digging up Jericho*, London, Ernest Benn, 1957, pp. 33, 262.

[5] *Op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

> coastal Palestine. When Joshua was instructed to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land, after their forty years wandering in the Wilderness, he wisely decided to make a reconnaissance, and his instructions to his scouts were "go view the land and Jericho." The control of Jericho was vital to the invader, and it is for this reason that the walls of Jericho were of crucial importance long before the time of Joshua.[6]

Kathleen Kenyon acknowledges that archaeology has failed us at just the point when it was needed to illuminate certain passages of Joshua. However, the physical facts are established that the Jordan Valley has always been "peculiarly liable to earthquakes." Professor Garstang gives us a list of the ones that have occurred at frequent intervals since the Stone Age,[7] and Miss Kenyon says:

> . . . A seismograph in fact shows several earth-tremors there each day. Major earthquakes are believed to be not quite so numerous now as formerly, but they still average four a century. It is highly probable that some of the collapses of the town walls are due to this cause. . . .[8]

An Arab historian, Nowairi, describes one that was supposed to have taken place in A.D. 1267 in the neighborhood of Damieh, on the Jordan River:

> . . . In the night preceding the 8th December, 1267, a lofty mound, which overlooked the river on the west, fell into it and dammed it up, so that the water of the river ceased to flow and none remained in its bed. The water spread over the valley above the dam and none flowed down the bed for some sixteen hours.[9]

Garstang points out the resemblance between this incident and the events described in Joshua (3:16):

> That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.

He identifies El Damieh as presumably the same place as "Adam" and concludes:

> It follows from these considerations that not only have earthquakes been frequent in the Jordan Rift, but that some of them have produced just those consequences that facilitated the Israelites in their movement towards Jericho, where the fall of the walls can also be fully explained by this and no other known cause.[10]

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[6] K. Kenyon, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[7] Garstang, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

[8] K. Kenyon, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

[9] Quoted by J. Garstang, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

How strange it appears to us that exactly the same condition was wrought by the two earthquakes—the one that divided the Red Sea and the other that gave a passage across Jordan. The earthquakes occurred when they were needed by the Israelites, with the result that their foes in each case were demoralized.

A book came to my notice some twenty years ago, when I was working upon *The Eleventh Commandment*, which gripped my attention and forced me to revise some of the views I had formed of these stories. It was called *The Call of Israel*, written by The Reverend W. J. Phythian-Adams, an archaeologist and Canon of Carlisle Cathedral. Garstang dedicates one of his books to him, and tells us how deeply indebted he is to him for the account of the Exodus. Phythian-Adams in his book deals with such controversial subjects as were debated years ago: the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night; and the darkness that covered the earth. He makes these parts of the wilderness story quite clear, and cites similar occurrences that have taken place in Italy. It is a book that should not be overlooked by the student.

It is the description of the passage of the Jordan which has caused many students to reject the whole of the tale as a myth. Perhaps they could not understand why the disturbances of natural phenomena should be attributed to the will of one tribal god—Yahweh—and not to another. If we let our thought rise to a universal conception of nature, we surely realize that the Creator could have no preferences such as are attributed to the god of the Israelites in the days of Joshua and Moses. The Creator has dealt with all the different peoples of the earth according to their origin and habitat. Some were near the poles; others in temperate zones; others along the torrid parallel. The same diffusion of different species we find in birds, animals, reptiles and even in plants. Orchids, for instance, are not found in cold regions.

Our conception of the Creator is comparatively modern. It was not known in the days of Moses and Joshua, who were acquainted only with the world around the Nile, the Jordan and the Euphrates. Their small world was a compact one and contained a god for nearly every tribe.

Joshua published no casualty reports, so we do not know whether the earthquake harmed his soldiers or whether the garrison of Jericho resisted the attack. But we do know what happened to the inhabitants of the city and their belongings:

> And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. . . .
>
> And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord (Joshua 6:21, 24).

Perhaps this is the first record of wholesale slaughter. Then came a crucial hitch in the plan of campaign. The story of the sin of Achan, as it is presented to us, is a complicated one, and from the reading, it is difficult to make sense of it. Joshua has sent out a reconnoitering force to spy out the land before the attack on Ai. The force meets with a reverse, and many are slain. When Joshua hears of the disaster he cries:

> . . . Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan (Joshua 7:7)!

The cause of this setback is described as the theft of Achan:

> When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it (Joshua 7:21).

The precise thing that was accursed is not mentioned, and we wonder why the belongings of the people of Jericho were placed in the ark without the slightest objection from Yahweh. Was the wedge of gold a Babylonian idol? It might have been. But perhaps the real reason for the reverse was that an individual had taken the spoil for his own profit. However, no matter how we try to work this out, we cannot understand why it was necessary for Yahweh to cause a defeat of Joshua's troops. He knew what had been done; he knew the culprit, and might have saved the commander of the armies a loss of prestige by dealing directly with Achan.

Professor Noth treats as legend the traditional conquest of Jericho and Ai. He says:

> . . . They are in fact aetiological legends based on the fact that these cities were destroyed. But the destruction of these cities—as is certain in the case of Ai, and probable in that of Jericho—had taken place before the Israelites' occupation, so that the latter were able simply to take possession of the ruins and their territories.[11]

[11] Martin Noth, *The History of Israel*, p. 149*n*.

CHAPTER XVI

JOSHUA'S CAMPAIGNS

The story of the taking of Ai by the Israelites is unique in the history of ancient warfare. Yahweh gave the command of what should be done, but it was left to Joshua to invent the strategy of the conflict. It was a bold plan and it worked, with the result that the people of Ai were decimated. No prisoners were taken, with the exception of the king himself, and he was hanged from a tree, and afterwards his carcass was taken down and buried under a heap of stones (8:29). Yahweh permitted only the spoils and cattle to be kept by the conquerors. As it was at Jericho, so it was at Ai, a merciless slaughter.

The one thing certain about the intentions of Yahweh, according to these stories, is that he never did things by halves, and we are surprised to find no report of casualties in the ranks of the Israelites. But as Professor Noth remarks, "Not surprisingly, we learn from Israelite sources only about the conflicts which ended in victory for the Israelites. No doubt the contrary also occurred."[1]

The reader should not overlook a ceremony that was performed by Joshua after the battle of Ai, because it indicates so clearly that Yahweh was a tribal god whose interest was only in one people. Those who rejected the idea that God was responsible for the fate of the people of Jericho and Ai should bear this in mind, and the following verses make this quite clear:

> Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in mount Ebal,
>
> As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings.
>
> And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.
>
> And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests and Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.
>
> And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.
>
> There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them (8:30-35).

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[1] Martin Noth, *The History of Israel*, p. 147.

What reply is to be made to the honest inquirer who asks for an explanation of the amazing contradictions of conduct and anomalies of action that are recorded in these stories? The commandments say, "Thou shalt not kill" and "Thou shalt not steal." But Yahweh orders the Israelites to commit both sins. Here again it is necessary to point out that the commandments were given to a special people, the chosen of Yahweh, and presumably the fifth and seventh commandments apply only to internecion among the Israelites. They must not kill each other or steal from one another. But they killed thousands of their people in the wilderness. And Joshua's treatment of Achan violated every canon of the Law. Not even his children were spared.

After the capture of Jericho and Ai, Joshua erected an altar, not on the scene of battle but on Mount Ebal. There is obviously some omission of details here, for Joshua was still encamped at Gilgal. The distance of Mount Ebal from Ai and the fact that it was located in "hostile country have constituted difficulties" for many of the early fathers, Edward Robertson tells us. Dr. Pfeiffer cites authorities to prove that this passage in Joshua (8:30) and similar ones in Deuteronomy (27:4) "were deliberately corrupted by the Jews" after the Samaritan schism.[2] However, as the scholars agree, the Book of Joshua is compiled from separate sources, and the account must be dated after Joshua's time. Hence, as Dr. Pfeiffer says, we must expect "glaring inconsistencies and incompatible statements."[3]

The importance of the Book of Joshua, according to Dr. S. A. Cook,

> is primarily religious; its conviction of the destiny of Israel and its inculcation of the unity and greatness of the God of Israel give expression to the philosophy of Israelite historians. As an historical record its value must depend upon a careful criticism of its contents in the light of biblical history and external information. . . . From a careful consideration of all the evidence, both internal and external, biblical scholars are now almost unanimous that the more finished picture of the Israelite invasion and settlement cannot be accepted as a historical record for the age. . . .[4]

The Gibeonites formed a league, and by a ruse made peace with Israel. Following the battle of Ai, emissaries of the Gibeonites appeared in shabby garments and made a petition to Joshua to spare them. They told him they had come a long distance, to plead with him. When he found out that they lived within the area and that their appearance was a pretense, he condemned them to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. The sentence was not unlike that imposed by the Egyptian king upon the Israelites.

Then Joshua went on to conquer southern Canaan. Dr. Pfeiffer tells us that this account of "a brilliant military campaign of united Israel under the leadership of Joshua" originates from the E narrative, written by an Ephraimitic author who glorifies Joshua as "an Ephraimitic hero."[5] Pfeiffer's analysis of the Book of Joshua is indispensable and should be studied by those who seek enlightenment.

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[2] Pfeiffer, *Introd. to the OT*, p. 810.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

[4] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed., "Book of Joshua," XIII, 154.

After the rationalist upsurge of the nineteenth century, when questions were asked about the verity of these amazing conquests, the stock reply of most of the clergymen was, "This is Holy Scripture." Many answered, "You must not doubt what you read because the Bible is a divinely inspired work." Is it any wonder that there was a drift away from the churches? Yet, every year now archaeologists are locating the places where these slaughterings occurred. Dr. Pfeiffer's conclusion is as follows:

> Nothwithstanding its imperfect preservation, this document furnishes us with the most reliable information on the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan. . . .
>
> . . . The J history of the conquest is an invaluable historical source, even in its abridged, mutilated, and textually corrupt form. It permits us to recognize the fanciful and idealized description given of the conquest in all later sources, and to gain at least a glimpse of the historical reality. . . .[6]

The northern conquest was accomplished by the waters of Merom. Dr. Pfeiffer suggests that Joshua's victory over Jabin, king of Hazor (11:1), and his allies, is possibly "magnified" into the conquest of northern Canaan. Nevertheless, the massacres ordered by Yahweh were carried out by Joshua and his army with a savagery not recorded in the history of any power of the Euphrates and Tigris. Extermination of the foe was the order of the day; their wives and children, their houses, their cattle, indeed all that they possessed.

Is it possible for the student of today to imagine what the Bible reader of fifty or sixty years ago thought about these stories, when he read the pamphlets of the rationalists and other Bible critics? With fuller and better knowledge gleaned from the discoveries of archaeologists, it must seem to the modern student that they were easily persuaded to cast suspicion upon the Books of Exodus and Joshua. However, the man of that day knew nothing of Yahweh; perhaps some specialists in Bible criticism knew what the term meant, but I do not remember hearing it when I began my Bible studies. Such works as those mentioned by Dr. Pfeiffer were known only to relatively few British scholars, and the theories presented by H. Hupfeld (1853), K. H. Graf (1866) and finally J. Wellhausen (between 1876 and 1884) were limited chiefly to the higher critics. The so-called Graf-Wellhausen theory of the sources of the Pentateuch "generally prevailed after 1880," according to Dr. Pfeiffer, but "its acceptance was by no means unanimous and some scholars still reject it."[7] The present trend is for more and more scholars to reject the purely textual methods of Graf-Wellhausen.

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[5] Pfeiffer, *The Books of the OT*, p. 110.

[6] Pfeiffer, *Introd. to the OT*, pp. 298, 300.

The word God (the Creator), with a capital "G," as the Bible reader of that day found it in Genesis and Exodus, meant to him the God he worshiped, according to the doctrine of his particular denomination. And when he asked himself if a loving Father could permit such slaughterings to take place—nay, order them—his faith was shaken, for undoubtedly he had learned a creed when he was a boy at Sunday School: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." (The rest was doctrinal interpretation and the cause of much bitter controversy among the sects.) He did not know that the word God, as it is used in the Pentateuch, was identified with Yahweh, a tribal god. Hence, his belief in Scripture received a mortal blow when the stories were questioned and, as his minister was not prepared to give the information he sought about these marvelous occurrences and awful decimations, he turned away. Thousands of them joined the Brotherhood Movement.

It is well that we should be reminded about the version that we now read, which is a translation written in our own language, that which we speak. It has been perfected in style and beauty of expression through centuries of thought given to it by John Wyclif (d. 1384), William Tyndale (d. 1536), Miles Coverdale (d. 1569), and those who gave us the Douay (1609) and the King James version (1611). A process of filtering and transmuting the old texts was carried out by men who feared neither block nor pyre. What a history that is!

So GOD in the versions we read is a Christian God (the Creator), unknown to the Israelites of the time of Joshua. His god spoke in his language, and planned his campaigns, leaving the strategy of them to him. Yahweh was a jealous god, preferred one people, exterminated others, and resided in one locality, according to the movements of the Israelites. Dr. Pfeiffer has the following to say about this matter, which helps to illuminate our understanding of it:

> . . . Whatever may be said of its dubious pedigree, "Jehovah" is and should remain the proper English rendering of *Yahweh*, the God of Israel who revealed his name to Moses in the burning bush. The original pronunciation of this name, which is not Hebrew but belongs to an otherwise unknown Semitic dialect, was unquestionably *Yahwe*. We do not know when this pronunciation ceased to be current among the Jews, but we may surmise that when with the Second Isaiah (about 540 B.C.) Jehovah was recognized to be the sole God in existence, it

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[7] *Books of the OT*, pp. 30-1.

> was felt more and more that it was incongruous to refer to him by a personal name. . . .[8]

The story in chapter 11 of Joshua, describing the next series of battles in northern Canaan, will scarcely bear close examination from the point of view of accurate history. Indeed, most of the Bible scholars accept it only with reservations. John Garstang expressed his doubt in plain terms, but the questions arose over the area in which the military operations took place. Recent excavations of Hazor by the Israeli archaeologist, Dr. Y. Yadin, have now established that Joshua had conquered Hazor in the thirteenth century B.C. Mycenean pottery found on the site in November 1958 "places Joshua's campaign about 3,300 years ago. The pottery was imported by the Canaanites in that century."

Dr. Yadin says that Hazor, the city "that Joshua conquered and burned," was probably the largest in Canaan, covering approximately 150 acres and with a possible population of 25,000 to 30,000 people.[9]

After the victory at the waters of Merom, Joshua pursued the enemy as far as Lebanon (11:17). We are told that he reduced the cities and strongholds to rubble. The wholesale methods of slaughter that began at Jericho were carried out with a ruthless zeal that satisfied Yahweh. It is impossible for the student of today to imagine what the skeptical critics of the Book of Joshua said of these campaigns in their booklets and pamphlets, which were circulated widely in England sixty years ago.

We shall not pause for long in an attempt to reach a clearer notion of the condition of the land after the last of Joshua's campaigns. If we accept the reports of the battles, our impression is that havoc was widespread, and most of the inhabitants had been slaughtered. Yet, in some cases, we learn that certain reports were exaggerated. What became of the hewers of wood and the drawers of water when their tribes rose against Joshua is not recorded. Other difficulties concerning these reports may be left for solution to captious critics who allow no mere detail to escape their notice.

Our purpose at this juncture is to learn something of the tribes that were allotted land to the north of the Samaritan border. They were Zebulon, Issachar and Asser, which settled on the borders of the plain of Jezreel and the plain of Akko. Professor Noth says:

> . . . It may be considered probable that they [the Galilean tribes] had moved into their later dwelling-places from a southerly or southeasterly direction. The tribe of Naphtali, on the other hand, must have come through the northern land east of the Jordan from an easterly direction, particularly if it may be assumed to have first gained a footing on the

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[8] *Introd. to the OT*, p. 94.

[9] "Joshua Conquest of Hazor is Dated," *New York Times*, May 12, 1959, p. 3.

> "Naphtali" mountains in the region of Kedes. It is almost impossible to say anything for sure as to how the tribe of Asher reached its territory.[10]

If the stronghold of Hazor, mentioned in the last campaign, was that described by Dr. Yadin, we may then take it that the whole of Galilee had suffered from fire and sword. But it is clear that Israel did not penetrate beyond the hill line behind the Mediterranean coast. Noth writes, "All the inhabitable places on the coast had been occupied long before the tribes of Israel appeared."[11] Both Noth and Pfeiffer agree that the Israelite tribes of the north "settled among the Canaanites wherever they could find room, without conquering any cities."[12] Professor Noth further describes the settlement:

> . . . The occupation was a long process which certainly did not begin with the conquest of cities. On the contrary, the attacks on isolated Canaanite cities probably did not begin until the Israelite tribes had established themselves in their vicinity, and had gained a footing in uninhabited or only sparsely inhabited areas in Palestine. The occupation of Canaanite cities which were situated for the most part on the borders of Israelite territory, may be thought of at most as the very last stage in the process of occupation, if it is not in fact even better to think of it as a development and rounding off of the process of occupation, and a coming to terms with the earlier inhabitants after the real occupation was over.[13]

The narrative, as told in Joshua, continues as follows:

> Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.
>
> This is the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri,
>
> From Sihor, which is before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, which is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites:
>
> From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that is beside the Sidonians, unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites:
>
> And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baal-gad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath.
>
> All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephoth-maim, and all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee (Joshua 13:1-6).

[10] Noth, *Hist. of Israel*, p. 78.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

[12] Pfeiffer, *Introd. to the OT*, p. 297.

[13] Noth, *Hist. of Israel*, p. 149.

How the long strip of Philistia and Phoenicia were left intact to plague Joshua in his old age is a mystery, for the campaign against the five kings west of Jerusalem and the invasion of Syria and Lebanon were waged upon their very borders. We are inclined to agree with Professor S. A. Cook that "the elaborate tribal-lists and boundaries prove to be of greater value for the geography than for the history of Palestine, and the attempts to use them as evidence for the early history of Israel have involved numerous additional difficulties and confusion."[14]

[14] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed., "Book of Joshua," XIII, 154.

CHAPTER XVII

GALILEE AND THE NORTHERN TRIBES

A range of hills runs north and south through the center of Galilee, tapering off as it nears the plain of Samaria. East and west of this range the country forms as it were two trenches or moats, one to the west bordering on the Mediterranean, and one to the east, on the Sea of Galilee. John Garstang, who covered nearly every mile of this section in his explorations, has described the nature of the whole area. The stronghold of Hazor stood toward the northeastern corner of Galilee in the uppermost part of the Jordan Valley. This Canaanite city dominated territories lying to the north, the west and the south. But for military purposes the routes in the three directions ran through valleys. There was no wide plain over which chariots could travel; indeed, the flat portions were narrow and sometimes steep. Garstang tells us that the northern part of Palestine was a natural area for chariots, but that the central plateau of Galilee was rock-strewn and not suited to them. In the great days of Hazor, in all probability, chariot routes were maintained in lower Galilee.

"The Egyptians maintained a direct road from Kinnereth to Hattin, and so past the foot of Tabor to Megiddo across the plain." Because it was the only way to the north, and the main route to Damascus, it "was indispensable to the Canaanites as to the Egyptians, and has probably always been maintained for wheeled traffic from that time."

The last campaign of Joshua, which was waged in the northeastern section of Palestine against the Canaanite stronghold of Hazor raises some difficult questions concerning the areas covered by the children of Canaan. In the narratives of former campaigns after the fall of Jericho, we are given the names of several tribes that occupied southern portions of the country. There were Edomites, Moabites, Amorites and three or four others. Who were these people? Were they indigenous to the land, and did they occupy it before Canaan was dispatched on his errand? We may assume that they were neither Hittites nor Egyptians, and it is rather strange that the names of these two powers do not appear in the stories of Joshua's battles before he was commanded to deal with the Philistines and Phoenicians.

The narratives in both Genesis and Exodus concerning these matters are sparse, but we do not notice this so much until we reach the period before the settlement of the twelve tribes of Israel. The spur of curiosity pricks the desire to light a lamp and enter the darkness of the unrecorded past. The desire is intensified by the discoveries of archaeologists. What we have learned recently about Sumer is an indication of how further explorations will cause us to revise our beliefs firmly held two generations ago. Was Canaanite a generic name for the "ites"—such as Indian is for the Algonquins, the Iroquois, the Crees, and Apaches? We are at a loss to solve this problem, and the catalogues and charts drawn up by Semitic scholars do not help us much. Professor Sabatino Moscati of the University of Rome tells us:

> The region composed of Palestine and Phoenicia is called in the Bible Canaan, and its inhabitants are called Canaanites. . . .
>
> It must be admitted that this terminology is in many respects an unsatisfactory one. Examination of the sources seems to show that the names Canaan and Canaanite meant in the first place Phoenicia and Phoenician, and were only later extended to cover a much wider geographical and ethnical denotation. Nor are the limits of that denotation satisfactorily defined; though they are sufficiently clear after the coming of the Aramaic tribes, this was a comparative late occurrence, and for an earlier period the terms Canaan and Canaanite are applied to the entire Syro-palestinian region and its inhabitants. . . .[1]

It was no easy task for the aging Joshua to undertake the settlement of the tribes in portions that would satisfy them. The stern command, which I called "the eleventh commandment," as it is laid down in Deuteronomy (19:14 and 27:17), evidently did not apply to the Israelites. They were at liberty to remove their neighbor's landmark without curse. Some tribes at the very beginning of the settlement raised protests against the size and location of their allotments. Such was the case with Manasseh, for we read in chapter 17 of Joshua:

> Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.
>
> Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.
>
> And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto?
>
> And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.
>
> And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Bethshean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel.
>
> And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only:
>
> But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive

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[1] *Ancient Semitic Civilizations*, New York, Putnam's, 1957, p. 99.

> out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong (vss. 12-18).

After such a beginning, who would wonder at the internecine quarrels and disturbances among the tribes, which caused the Judges hours of embarrassment and perplexity? After this, Joshua called for three men from each tribe to go out and survey the land; and they "shall divide it into seven parts."

For our purpose, we shall take note of the lots that were drawn for Zebulon, Issachar and Naphtali. These tribes were successful in drawing the third lot, the fourth lot, and the sixth lot respectively. Then a protest was raised by the Levites, saying "The Lord commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle" (21:2). The children of Israel complied with this command.

Are all these extravagant grants made in lieu of the tithe, or are they added to it? If the Levites were not to work, what were they doing with cattle? There are so many contradictions of this order that the reader becomes confused and has very often to trace back to some source to refresh his mind about original conditions and particular duties to be fulfilled.

This is only one of many of the questions that have vexed Bible readers, for it seemed to the ordinary man that the Levites had made a claim that was out of all proportion to their office. It is true the purpose and aim of the settlement was to found a "kingdom of priests." Did this extraordinary grant mean that all those who were not of the branch of Levi were to be peasants, hewers of wood and drawers of water, or if the term is preferred, agriculturists to provide sustenance for the priests? A pamphlet was written upon this arbitrary deal by Gerald Massey, I think, in which it was shown to be unfair and that the priests had gained in luxury at the expense of the people who had fought the battles for Joshua. Perhaps this was the nefarious seed that was sown which afterwards brought forth ill fruit.

The blessings of Joshua that fell upon different tribes are somewhat curious in respect to the division of the booty. To the half tribe of Manasseh he said:

> . . . Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren (22:8).

Joshua's knowledge of the geography of the Promised Land is remarkable in this respect: that he knew the cities and villages of the different sections that were to be allotted to the tribes. Perhaps he learned all this in the course of the battles, but to remember the place names and the nature of the territory when the time came for allotment astonishes the student.

In studying several different maps showing the settlement of the tribes in Lower and Upper Galilee, there are many striking differences regarding the portions taken by Issachar, Zebulon and Naphtali. Dr. Pfeiffer suggests that this is due to the fact that later Deuteronomistic historians "suppressed" the early "account of the settlement in Canaan *in toto* because its portrayal of historical facts—tragic failures and limited achievements—could not be reconciled to the later idealization of the time of Joshua."[2] In considering the matter of the settlement of the tribes, it should be pointed out that most Old Testament scholars now believe they did not all come from Egypt, but from the south and east as well.

Although the particulars we find in the Book of Joshua seem to be explicit, the work of the archaeologists in that part of Palestine reveals some features of Galilee that are quite new to us. John Garstang in his book, *The Foundations of Bible History*, *Joshua Judges*, has an illuminating passage upon this problem. He says:

> Issachar we have already met on the northern border of Manasseh. The impregnable fortresses of Bethshean, Ibleam, Taanak and Megiddo, which at all times played a leading part in the Egyptian or Canaanite control of this area, separated it from the territory of Manasseh. They fringe the southern border to the valley of Jezreel and the plain of Esdraelon, wherein later allusions also regularly place this tribe. The Lot had reserved to Issachar the choicest area in all Palestine for camp life; and the fact is reflected by the words used in the Blessing of Moses: *Rejoice . . . Issachar, in thy tents.*
>
> On the other hand, the strength of the Canaanite cities clearly restrained the people of Issachar for many generations from securing territorial rights, and the privilege of settling in the region seems to have been obtained at the price of their personal servitude.[3]

Of the origin of the name Issachar, Professor Noth writes:

> . . . The tribe's curious name, which arose after its occupation of the land . . . means "labourer" and the name was evidently first given to it as a nickname, in connection with the satirical line about Issachar which has come down to us in Genesis xlix, 15 in the blessing of Jacob, where Issachar's status is also referred to as that of a dependent labourer.[4]

And further he says:

> . . . Judah and probably Issachar as well were part of the older group of Israelite tribes which were the first to settle in the land. On the other hand, in the case of Issachar, the external sequence of events suggests that this tribe moved into its territory not long after the end of the

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[2] *Introd. to the OT*, p. 296.

[3] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 239-40.

[4] *Hist. of Israel*, p. 66.

> Amarna period. We must therefore place the beginnings of the Israelite occupation in the second half of the 14th century B.C. . . .[5]

After a close study of works written by archaeologists and Bible scholars since Garstang's work was published more than twenty years ago, the impression is borne in upon us that in some way, not explained, the Canaanites were not wholly subservient to the tribes that occupied Galilee. It is sometimes overlooked that there are references in Joshua and Judges to the influence the natives had upon the newcomers. It can safely be assumed that many of the troubles that arose after the settlement might be attributed to the amalgamations of the cults, their customs, habits and language. There were periods of sore trial. For we can imagine the subservient actions of the tribes who had to learn from the natives the ordinary work of providing themselves with material things.

In reading the Books of Joshua and Judges, one is struck by the peculiar differences between what happened north of Mount Tabor and what happened to Judah and the other tribes to the south. It reads like the history of two different peoples in widely different lands.

The abundance of new records the archaeologists have discovered during the past fifty years has given our Bible scholars the task of revising many of the works upon which students relied in the days when it was considered to be something of an intellectual crime to question history as it is written in the Old Testament. The research spent upon the Egyptian archives has produced evidence of the conditions in what is now called Palestine, which puts many of the references in the early books of the Pentateuch in quite another light.

It is amazing to realize how much we know now of the dynasties and peoples that fought over the ground from Hittite domains down through Damascus, along the coast of Phoenicia, into the territories of the Amorites and the Canaanites, down to the Nile delta as far as Memphis. All this new information gives us food for thought concerning the ethnic origins of the people. Moreover, it has been of the greatest value to the masters of Semitic languages, especially in the tasks of deciphering many of the inscriptions upon ancient monuments and record stones.

The tablets found at Ras Shamra, in a previously unknown cuneiform alphabet, have established a relationship between a Canaanite dialect and ancestral Hebrew.[6] There seems to be no end to the discoveries which will probably force us to revise our notions formed upon the Scriptures of the time of Moses and Joshua.

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[5] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[6] Schaeffer, C. F. A., *Le Palais Royal d'Ugarit*. Vols. II (1957) III (1955) and IV (1956), now published, with Vol. I and subsequent ones still in preparation, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale. *Cf.* below, pp. 134-5.

To my mind these discoveries are the means of letting new light in upon the peoples who occupied the long strip from Hazor down the Jordan to the Dead Sea. The more we know of them, their language and their customs, to say nothing of their cults, the simpler our task will be in trying to find an acceptable reason why the people in the territory that was called Galilee differed so widely in many respects from the people who waged war against the invading forces of Joshua. That they were different should be plain to anyone who has given thought to the many references of intermarriage that took place between the Hebrews and those who may be called the natives of the land.

The importance of the problems concerning the language used by peoples mentioned in the Old Testament may be appreciated by referring to the Hittite tongues. Before Garstang, Hrozný, Forrer and others interpreted the Hittite texts in cuneiform, some learned people denied that the old nations extending from the Aegean to northern Mesopotamia spoke or understood a Semitic language. This view has been altogether changed. About thirty years ago John Garstang published his invaluable work, *The Hittite Empire*. He was then considered one of the pioneers of archaeological-scientific research in what we call Turkey and northern Palestine. He says:

> . . . Though we know nothing of the Hattic race or races, and though official Hittite freely employed the Semitic language and syllabary for diplomatic and foreign correspondence, we are disposed on these general grounds to presuppose an Aryan or Indo-European origin for their race and rulers. In this connection an analysis of the Hittite documents shows, in fact, that apart from the Semitic and other foreign texts, two "native" languages were employed, namely the offical Hittite and the proto-Hittite.[7]

In the thirteenth century B.C., Egyptian sovereignty was restored in Syria-Palestine, while "the Hittites had acquired dominion over Northern Syria," Professor Noth tells us, and "in the Battle of Kadesh on the Orontes they were strong enough to thwart the Pharaoh's attempt to attack the Hittite sphere of influence and were therefore able to maintain their position throughout the northern half of Syria."[8] We know that in 1271 a treaty of peace and alliance was made between Hattushilish III and Ramses II, in which the Syrian possessions of the Hittites were recognized by the Egyptians.

This may give us an idea of the extension of Hittite influence down through Palestine and the effect that it had upon the Canaanite stock and tongue. Indeed, we learn in II Samuel 11 that the husband of Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, was Uriah the Hittite. Mixed marriages mean mixed tongues, and long occupation of enemy territory brought about changes that altered the blood strain and speech of natives. These suggestions will go far to help us to understand the reasons for the defections and troubles which arose later concerning marriage laws and other ritual practices. Dr. Albright, in *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, says:

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[7] *Loc. cit.*, New York, Richard R. Smith, 1930, p. 38.

[8] Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

> Hurrian and Hittite religion formed in turn a bridge between the Semitic world and the Aegean, reflecting as many points of contact with the latter as with the former, though it must be said that the parallels with Aegean religion seem more fundamental.[9]

Do the wars of Joshua mark the beginning of religious conflicts? Are we justified in dating the fall of Jericho as one of the first recorded events when diverse religious bodies slaughtered one another? It is a moot question, I admit, for we do not know of any earlier struggles. The revolt of Ikhnaton was without bloodshed. The history of the Egyptians, the Hittites, the Amorites and other Semitic and non-Semitic peoples reveals only political wars. Of course, it may be said that the wars of Joshua were political, in consequence of the invasion of Palestine, but such an idea overlooks the fact that he did not introduce a political system when he settled the tribes after the fall of Hazor, the end of his campaigns. The allotment of the country he had conquered was economic; Judges—not politicians—were deputed to decide as arbitrators of the differences and frictions which arose between men and groups of his people. This is the only system which is devoid of political government.

As for the Levites and the grant made to them to occupy the cities, it did not savor of bureaucratic rule. It is true they were not classified as producers of wealth. They rendered service, and the one that has always been recognized as essential for the spiritual welfare of man. The concession of the grant of tithe was made to them for the upkeep of places of worship and for their maintenance. The tithe might be considered the first practical method of the imposition of rent collecting, that is, rent for the *use-possession of land*, as a very different imposition from that of taxing wealth. First fruits were the payment of economic rent, the first of which we have record.

If such a notion will stand close examination, it will go far to reveal the fundamental sense of Moses in laying a basis in accordance with justice for land users. To my mind, his economic wisdom was beyond reproach, but how he came by it, no one knows. As a seer he still stands as the peer of the ages. His work is bare of the slightest political trend. When we come to consider the tribulations that followed the break with the tradition of Moses in the settlement and the rule of Judges, it might perhaps have been better to have stopped short on the east side of the Dead Sea. But the orders of Yahweh had to be fulfilled. What he would have thought of his people setting up a political State may be guessed, for if there is one thing certain about the basic conditions of the settlement of the tribes, it is made perfectly plain in the Scriptures that it was solely economic. There was no ruler then to take tribute from the people. The only deduction from the production of wealth of people generally was the tithe—the tenth—and that went to the sons of Levi, because they did not labor and held a position of privilege. The tithe was economic rent, and at first it was cheerfully paid by the producers. Later on, when we deal with the Prophets, we shall see what astonishing changes took place. The stable conditions of a peasantry were ruined by the exactions of the political parasites.

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[9] *Op. cit.*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, 1942, p. 192.

CHAPTER XVIII

LANGUAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

The importance of Galilee must be emphasized in this story of *From Ur to Nazareth*. This is the reason why repeatedly I turn the reader's attention to the conditions that prevailed in that section of Palestine. The Old Testament is short on information of value in our quest, and in reading it we are apt to think it was so insignificant a part of the Promised Land that it had no history.

It should be noted, however, that after the settlement of the tribes we learn little or nothing about the future of Zebulon and Issachar. The three northern ones, as tribes, disappear as if they had never existed. And yet, when we come to the New Testament, Galilee is the core, the very heart and lungs of the place of the Man of Nazareth.

Save for the genealogy in Matthew's Gospel, one looks in vain for even a sketch of the antecedents of Jesus and his father and mother. Perhaps the learned critics who have given us such brilliant works upon his life and mission have not thought it worth while to give him a background in Galilee. Jesus is so different from any other character presented in the Old or New Testaments that repeatedly I have asked myself: who were the Galileans and why do they differ so widely from the Judeans? It may be worth while to hark back to the first records given in the Pentateuch of what happened in the land before it was given to the tribe of Issachar.

An earnest student must have a callous conscience to be able to read without a qualm the stories of the campaigns that were fought at Jericho and those after it. For here he will find the practice of genocide (a term used after the Second World War to describe the extermination of a people) carried out with a recklessness that shocks the sensibilities. The instructions given by Yahweh to Moses, and by Moses to Joshua have never been exceeded in ruthlessness by any conquering vandal. Those of Timur and other such scourgers seem comparatively small. The promise of a land of milk and honey for those that came out of Egypt was to be gained by wholesale slaughter of the natives.

As we have suggested previously, the wars that were necessary to rid the Promised Land of the native were carried on by Joshua and his hosts in spite of the seventh commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." Although it may be urged that this instruction does not apply to foreigners—that it is an injunction against one Israelite killing another—still, we must admit that none of the commandments makes an exception. They are all sweeping in their range. It is worth giving a thought to this, because when we reach the time when Jesus lived, we shall find it necessary to seek reasons why he was not involved in any of the revolts that took place in Galilee.

The instructions were explicit: in Exodus 32:27 the order is "Slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour." In Deuteronomy 20:17 we read, "But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites." The work to which Joshua was committed by the order of Yahweh is told in 10:40, "Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded." In Chapter 11, verse 14, we learn, "All the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe."

The area in which most of this took place lies south of the border of Galilee. Perhaps by that time Joshua was feeling rather jaded. We know he had been fighting for many years and died, perhaps, before his work was completely finished.

Still, we do learn in Joshua 21:32 that the tribe of Naphtali received some cities in Galilee, one of which was to be a city of refuge. Altogether, six cities of refuge were "provided for unintentional murderers and forty-eight cities allotted to the Levites." At Shechem Joshua called all the tribes together to hearken unto the words of Yahweh. They were told, "I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed (24:3). . . . And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat" (24:13).

A long time had passed since the campaign, before the author of the Book of Joshua set his pen to paper; and in this way one who was not an eyewitness of what took place should escape the censure of the purist for contradictions and exaggerations. Still, both Joshua and Judges stand as records from which we must learn as best we may how the settlement of the tribes that came from Egypt was made, and where the slaughter ended and the armies took a rest. The Book of Judges covers the period from Joshua to Samuel, about two and a half to three centuries. Although Jethro had advised Moses to appoint Judges to decide the rights and wrongs of individual cases (Exod. 18:21-22), we may be sure that there was no time during the great wars against the natives to attend to personal matters and domestic affairs. Presumably each tribe had its own court of justice in which the law was stated and cases decided.

In the third chapter of Judges we find that the work of the extermination of the natives was not as bad as it is reported in Joshua, for in the fifth and sixth verses we are told:

> And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:
>
> And they took their daughters to be their wives, and they gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

Many times in Judges we are told of the backsliding of the tribes. They were accused of turning away from Yahweh and worshiping false gods. Who were these deities of a cult? Were they Egyptian as well as Canaanite? We gather that the people who crossed the Red Sea, spent forty years in the wilderness, and supplied an army for Joshua to lay siege to Jericho had been worshiping idols when they were in bondage. Some of the authorities have decided that from the time of the appearance of Joseph in Egypt to the days of Moses, three or four hundred years elapsed. Professor Noth is of the opinion that

> the computing of the sojourn in Egypt at 430 years in Exod. xii, 40 f. . . . is no doubt much too high. It is countered by the older reference to four generations in Gen. xv, 16 which is more likely to be correct, though even that figure may be too high. We have nothing to work on for a more exact computation.[1]

We may assume that the language they spoke when they were taken into captivity was not the one used when they escaped from the Pharaoh. The latter must have been Egyptian. Some students have suggested that there were Hebrew teachers who instructed the slaves, but that seems a far-fetched notion, although we do know that Moses was the child of a Levite woman.

The language problem is one of the thorniest with which we are confronted in our attempt to solve some of the riddles in the Pentateuch as well as those in Joshua and Judges. Four centuries in a foreign land constitute a long time for slaves to remember the tongue they spoke before they were captured. Slaves must be commanded by their captors, for no one would expect overseers to be linguists. No doubt, the whip was a potent mentor, which forced the slave to understand the language of an order.

While the archaeologist shifts the sand and rubble, and digs down to the remains of ancient places in Bible lands, many revisions will have to be made in our ideas of the Old Testament accounts of the history of the Hebrews. Several revisions that may be attributed to the findings of the archaeologist are mentioned in many recent books. So the work of the archaeologist frequently alters our opinions about the historical validity or chronology of the Old Testament record. But it should be borne in mind that there is more than a modicum of truth in most of the narratives, and John Garstang in his works tells us that he has found "no radical flaw . . . at all in the topography and archaeology of these documents." He says further:

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[1] *History of Israel*, p. 113*n*.

> . . . Moreover, a study of the subject-matter shows that these old portions of the Books contain after all the core of the historical narrative, and are relatively free from discrepancies, giving a straightforward and fairly continuous account of the sequence of events. . . .
>
> The results of piecing together the threads of evidence in this way will probably astonish many readers; and it has convinced the writer, after years of study, that not only were these records in general founded upon fact, but they must have been derived from earlier writings, almost contemporary with the events described, so detailed and reliable is their information.[2]

Cowley tells us that "Abraham, the wandering Aramean, was called *Ha-'ibhri* because he traveled about for trading purposes" and that his language was the *lingua franca* of eastern trade. This must have been the tongue he spoke when he reached Canaan; the same one that Joseph used when he went to Egypt. But not all the authorities agree on this matter; there is a great division of opinion. Professor G. R. Driver concurs in this view, for he states:

> . . . Tradition asserts that Abraham came from Babylonia by Haran, through Hittite and Amorite territory, into Palestine. The analysis, too, of the Hebrew language shows that those who spoke it borrowed elements from and therefore in all probability passed through lands whose inhabitants spoke the Babylonian, Amorite (or Aramaean) and Canaanite languages. . . .[3]

The archaeologist has been so busy during the past fifty years in Bible lands that it is difficult to keep pace with his findings. Some of them change radically our views of the literature of the Old Testament. Dr. William F. Albright, in the Ayer Lectures, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, gives us an idea of some of the new evidence unearthed by the excavators:

> By far the most important epigraphic class is formed by several hundred clay tablets and fragments, excavated by C. F. A. Schaeffer at Ugarit (Ras Shamrah on the coast of northern Syria) between 1929 and 1939. Published by Ch. Virolleaud and deciphered by H. Bauer and P. Dhorme, these documents in a previously unknown cuneiform alphabet and in a Canaanite dialect closely related to ancestral Hebrew have proved to be epoch-making. . . .[4]

These finds were a revelation, and in some respects changed views that had hardened in the minds of scholars. Still the work goes on far away from the land of Ikhnaton. It extends to Syria and the discoveries at Carchemish; and away to the east to the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris the archaeologist is at work. Albright says:

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[2] *Foundations of Bible History*, pp. vii-viii.

[3] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed., "Hebrew Literature," XI, 354.

[4] *Loc. cit.*, p. 37. *Cf. supra* ch. XVII.

> . . . The Amarna Tablets, discovered in Egypt in 1887, were nearly all written in Palestine and Syria, and thus are of first-hand value for the light which they shed on the religions of these countries in the century and a half just before the Israelite conquest. Many Akkadian tablets from the period 1500-1200 B.C. have been discovered in the past generation at such sites as Ugarit, Qatna and Alalakh in Syria, Taanach, Shechem, etc., in Palestine; of these we may single out the temple inventories from Qatna (el-Mishrifeh) as particularly significant for our purposes. In many ways the most important of all these groups is the great mass of tablets excavated in 1936-39 at Mari (Tell el-Harîri) on the Middle Euphrates by André Parrot. These tablets contain a wealth of evidence bearing on the religion of Syria and northwestern Mesopotamia in the eighteenth century B.C. From them we shall learn practically the entire Northwest-Semitic nomenclature in the middle of the Patriarchal Age; we shall also learn the names of many gods, Northwest-Semitic words for religious objects and ideas, together with data bearing on cultic practice in Syria and the Euphrates Valley. Together with the Old-Assyrian documents from Cappadocia (cir. 1800 B.C.) and contemporary documents from Babylonia and Northern Mesopotamia they will enable us to determine the major features of early Hebrew and Amorite religion. We are far from having exhausted the rich material in Akkadian cuneiform bearing on our subject—in fact the publication of over twenty thousand tablets from Mari has barely begun. Meanwhile the student can use the readings and interpretations of recognized specialists with considerable confidence, since Akkadian can now be read almost as well as Hebrew. . . .[5]

Some of the many yawning gaps in the history of language from the time of Hammurabi and Abraham to that of the Exodus from Egypt, are being filled in by the scholars, but the masters of Semitic language would be the first to admit they have not succeeded in bridging all of them. However, this is not the only difficulty one encounters, for there were so many wars in nations north and south that it is hard to tell which tongue was spoken by the conquerors and which by the defeated. We know the Hittites came down into northern Syria; we also know that the Egyptians scourged the country from the Delta to Mount Tabor.

It is startling to learn from the fragments of the writings of the Egyptian priest Manetho that Moses received his priestly education and learned all the wisdom of the Egyptians in the city of Heliopolis. Manetho is our earliest commentator, having lived about the time of the Ptolemies. Those of us who know something about Early English may form a very good idea of the changes in language that take place in a few hundred years. Our tongue changed with the literary revolutions of the age. It was the same with the French. The Parisian of today would find Rabelais and Villon in script almost undecipherable, and I have learned from scholars teaching in universities that the students of today have difficulty in reading Raphe Robynson's first translation of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*. Perhaps the most notable change of all was the disappearance of Norman French after the rule of the Angevins in England. But the rudiments spoken by the people themselves remain as a basis of the language that will be spoken long generations afterwards.

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[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 38-9. Dr. Sidney Smith informs me that there is a wide difference of opinion among scholars about the date of the so-called "Old-Assyrian documents." "The important point to remember is that these tablets cover about a century which ended some fifty years before Hammurabi."

To us, in studying what we assume to be the beginnings of the civilizations that rose up from the Tigris and the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, and from the shores of the Black Sea down the waters of the Jordan and the Nile to Memphis, the problem is to find if we can the language the first authors of the Books of the Old Testament used for the Hebrew version. For language is the sign manual of the people. Was that so with cuneiform; was it so with the hieroglyphics of Egypt? How little we knew until Champollion found the Rosetta Stone. And now the Egyptian inscriptions on stele and monument can be read with ease, and the cuneiform of the Akkadians presents no difficulty to a Sidney Smith. However, there is much to be done; and now that the archaeologist is digging down into the remains of civilization, which some of the learned men of the nineteenth century regarded as myths, we never know what they will turn up. The Dead Sea Scrolls may be only the first of a long series of new documents.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES

There was a time when the children of Israel were under the curse of having to earn their bread by the sweat of their brows, but evidently a change of policy occurred, for after the great battles, the labor penalty was forgotten. The change that came about so far as labor was concerned really amounted to saying to an enemy, "You will produce *our* bread by the sweat of *your* brow."

The Canaanites must have been a remarkable people, for no matter how often they were defeated in war and their civilians were put to the sword, they rose again phoenix-like to trouble the Israelites. The first chapter of Judges is a revelation of their powers of resuscitation.

The story of the "house of Joseph," the most important tribe of Central Palestine, is difficult to follow, for it flatly contradicts many portions of the narrative of the battles of Joshua, which raged south of the land of Samaria. Still, we must have patience and try to learn what we can in Judges of how the different tribes fared in the territories allotted to them.

Professor Noth tells us that the "house of Joseph" probably came from the east or southeast, over the lower Jordan; "it evidently occupied the area in which it subsequently settled, from the south-east corner."[1]

> . . . The "house of Joseph" represented an apparently very comprehensive association of families, which soon divided into two tribes when the occupation of the land began. The term "house of Joseph" does not suggest a real tribal name. . . . It must be assumed that the name "house of Joseph" derives from the period before the occupation as a description of a fairly large association of tribes which finally settled in the central land west of the Jordan. They were received into the twelve-tribe system first of all only as a single member under the old common name, because there was only one place vacant for them within the framework of the established twelve. . . .[2]

In the second chapter of Judges we learn that

> . . . They forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger.
>
> And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth (2:12-13).

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[1] *Hist. of Israel*, p. 75.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

The memory of cult worship took "an unconscionable time a-dying," to use the phrase of Charles II. We remember the difficulties of Moses in the desert and the many warnings that were given to the Israelites to worship one god. But now there comes a recrudescence of cult craving, which the Judges had to deal with. Although Judges "delivered them out of the hand of their enemies," as soon as the Judge was dead, they returned to their evil ways and outdid their fathers in serving strange gods (Judg. 2:18-19).

The punishment for these backslidings was a strange one. To rebuke them for their sins, Yahweh decided not to "drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died" (Judg. 2:21), but

> . . . He sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years (3:8).

It is somewhat bewildering to follow the confusing changes of policy. The hated enemy, who suffered so severely in the battles, is sometimes conveniently used as a scourge to fall on the Israelites for their reversion to strange gods. At other times, they amalgamate with the foe and dwell among them, taking their daughters as wives, as we learn in Judges 3:5-6.

After this, the scene changes. We are taken away to Moab on the east side of the Dead Sea, and we learn that the children of Israel "served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years" (3:14). Other battles took place, and after Moab was subdued, the land had rest for fourscore years.

We search in vain for any evidence of fulfillment of the purpose of Joshua's campaigns. The utopian idea of settling the twelve tribes in a land of milk and honey is as far off after the days of Deborah and Sisera as it was when the children were in the wilderness. So far there has been nothing but strife, reversions to idolatry and years of servitude as penalties, revealed in chapter after chapter. We may have had a hope that the three tribes that settled in the north would escape the disturbances and uprisings of the south. But there is not one word of the tribes that settled about Galilee enjoying peace and cultivating the land. Perhaps it was even too much for a Moses to hope that men would have time to count their blessings one by one and live in harmony. Yet, we learn enough in this to temper our minds for more extraordinary changes that were to have direful consequences for Israel.

The first indication we find of a desire to be other than a kingdom of priests is when the Israelites ask Gideon to be their king:

> Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hands of Midian.
>
> And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you (Judg. 8:22-23).

Garstang in *The Foundations of Bible History* has some pertinent remarks to make about this, which give us an idea of the condition under which the Israelites were then living. He says:

> Under these circumstances, the rally of the tribes around Gideon and the successful effort to release the oppressed territory of Issachar and Manasseh appears in a new light. It discloses the Israelites for the first time as the strongest element in the population of the plateau, and accepting responsibility for the protection of the land they occupied. Thrown upon their own resources before the menace of invasion, the tribes proved again the value of union: the desire to make Gideon their king and common leader gave expression to the growing need for mutual support which foreshadowed the future welding of the tribes. . . .[3]

Professor Noth paints a slightly different picture. He tells us that the Midianites constituted a large association of tribes to the east and south of Palestine. It seems that every year they were accustomed to appear on the borders of Palestine with their camels, which struck terror in the hearts of the Israelite tribes. On this particular occasion they made a deep inroad into Palestine, threatening the plain of Jezreel and the whole country as far as Gaza (Judg. 6:4). It was after seed-time "just when the seed was coming up," and they let their camels graze off the seed and took what they needed of the produce of the land and the cattle of the inhabitants."

After Gideon's victory, no more is heard of the Midianites. Considering the terror occasioned by their annual visits up to the time that Gideon had roused the Israelites to defend themselves, it is no wonder they long remembered the "day of Midian" and felt grateful to Gideon. Of his reply to the Israelites when they asked him to accept the hereditary office of "ruler" Noth remarks as follows:

> . . . This brief story . . . fairly certainly reflects an attitude that was current among the tribes of Israel before the rise of the monarchy, since only this kind of outlook can explain the historical fact that the idea of monarchy became active so late and went so much against the general grain in Israel. . . . The sacred society of the tribes of Israel was committed exclusively to its own God and his will became a historical force in the historical manifestation of the "particularity" of Israel.[4]

There is one thing that might be said about this move, and it is that men are men, no matter which tribal god is their ruler. The stories of Moses and Joshua should be sufficient for us to draw the conclusion that the mass of men have to be ruled and the more adamant and stern the captain is, the better chance they have of living a disciplined existence. Indeed, we learn this from all ancient history. The reason for it is that the mass is illiterate, lustful, greedy, and lazy. There is little evidence that the workaday people of any ancient period ever revealed a voluntary desire to keep the law.

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[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 325.

[4] *Hist. of Israel*, pp. 161, 162, 165.

Thus, we have reached the period when we must realize that the beautiful theory of a kingdom of priests and a contented peasantry enjoying a land of milk and honey came to nothing. In such affairs there is no substitute for strict discipline. After the death of Gideon "the children of Israel turned again, and went a-whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god" (Judg. 8:33).

Then came Abimelech, who offered to reign over them, but only a small section accepted him as king. Owing to inter-tribal jealousies, his reign lasted only three years. It was a sad experience. Gaal, the leader of the men of Shechem cried out: "Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him" (Judg. 9:28)?

Let us now pause and reflect upon the gains and losses entailed by the invasions since the fall of Jericho. For we are threatened with a crisis that portends a complete reversal of the plan of Moses. It should be remembered that the broad principles of his economic plan for the settlement were devoid of ethical flaws. Although general in scope, they were intended to apply only to the Israelites. The advice concerning neighbors referred to members of the tribes, not to alien neighbors. Yet it may be said that the commandments as a whole are applicable to all sections of humankind. Each one, as a guide to conduct, is perfect, and may be taken to heart by friend or foe.

Perhaps there was no time to cultivate in practice the Mosaic ordinances. From the time the Israelites crossed the Jordan until the last campaign of Joshua, their chief occupation must have been war, or preparations for it. During this long period there is no mention in the early Books of any cultural undertaking. Altars were constructed, but they were nothing more than piles of stone. However, this was not an original contribution, for the altar made of boulders is the earliest of all the primitive specimens on record.

There are two instances of inscriptions being placed upon slabs, but the archaeologists complain of the dearth of art specimens that may be attributed to Israelite workmanship. The results of excavations show relics of earlier peoples who dwelt in the land long before Canaan dwelt there. The finds of Garstang at Jericho, Hazor, and other places carry us back to earlier civilizations.

Although Cain was cursed to build the first city, there is no mention of his descendants using the chisel or trowel of the stone mason, for even in the period of Abimelech they were still tent dwellers, with the exception of the Levites. In sum, it seems to be a story of defeat, a distressing failure to achieve any of the Mosaic aims.

The few ritual observances that are mentioned, even as late as the short reign of Abimelech, are not impressive, for there is little evidence of any influence on the part of the sons of Levi to guide or advise the people, even in the intervals between the campaigns. Surely the ordinances concerned with physical needs, as they are laid down in Leviticus, are of much later date. Indeed, they read as if they were inserted into the Pentateuch. All that part of the Book of Leviticus which the editors of the sixth century B.C. devoted to priestly regulations about sacrificial worship—what should be eaten, what should be worn, of sanitary rules and other ordinances of daily life—seems to have no close relation of the Laws of Moses. We read little or nothing in Judges about infractions of these rules and regulations, and indeed, in searching the records of other peoples before the time of Moses, I fail to find any emphasis being given to the detail of daily intercourse of men and women.

The introduction of these sanitary regulations confuses the reader, who knows thoroughly well that each man has his own way of ordering his hygiene. Yet, it may be suggested that when the "stiff-necked people" reverted to the gods they had known before Moses led them, no such restrictions were placed upon their conduct, and that long after they were settled in Canaan, they had the desire to be free of priestly taboos and to live their lives in their own way. Surely we know only too well that that is a very old caprice of man.

Why some of the critics should complain about the dearth of information regarding the practical duties of the Levites seems strange. What could be expected from a body that did not have to earn their bread by the sweat of their brows? In the division of the spoils, we are informed that they got forty-eight cities and suburbs. Priests who enjoy such luxuries find it difficult to stay in the straight and narrow path.

The numerous examples of waywardness, the tribal jealousies, the reversions to idol worship and other backslidings are manifestations of the impotence of those who wished to found a kingdom of priests. This is a problem that has caused the Bible reader some perplexity, and well it might. For Yahweh had direct oral communication with his spokesmen, but there is not one instance of the tribal god reminding the sons of Levi of the conditions under which they took office.

The Mosaic idea of settlement was economic, not political, and the only parasites under it were to be the priests, because they were assigned a special duty. What Moses would have thought of them, had it occurred to him that in the division of the spoils after the battles they would become masters of the cities, is a moot point. But according to my reading of the economic sections of Deuteronomy, Moses seemed to desire for the Israelites nothing more than a contented peasantry producing for their own needs and desires. In theory, the plan was perfect, but alas, man had to put it into practice if he could. And as he has always demolished every economic plan for his development and betterment, it seemed absurd to hope for reform.

From the time the Israelites were taken out of Goshen by Moses down to the end of Joshua's wars, we are not told anything about the industrial activities of the people. Yet, we take for granted that during the period they were in the wilderness they learned to make weapons of war. It is not likely that they were armed when the trek began. These gaps and omissions in the story may be of no interest whatever to those who read the Bible, verse by verse, and desire nothing more than what is set down in the Book. What the captives were engaged in doing in Egypt is not so difficult to imagine. In all probability, adult men were employed on schemes of public works, making roads, dredging harbors, and building monuments; but in the capacity of common laborers.

When our minds turn in this direction, one thought leads to another, and we wonder how people of shepherd origin found the necessaries and supplies required by nomads. Take, for example, the materials for a tent and setting it up. Where was the canvas woven or the goat skin shaped? For these purposes, weavers, carpenters, ropemakers were necessary, and there must have been an enormous demand for these things when the tribes settled in the areas allotted to them.

Tent-making was an urban trade. Later, Saul of Tarsus was a tentmaker, and in all probability, one of his chief objects in going to Jerusalem was to find work as well as to receive the tutelage of Gamaliel, as an avocation. Hence, the only place in the Promised Land where the industry of tentmaking would be carried on to any extent was Jerusalem, which was not conquered from the Jebusites until the time of David. But perhaps after the division of the spoil and the settlement of the tribes, tents were discarded and the Israelites adopted the shelters (whatever they were) that housed their foes.

This may seem a trivial matter, but when one considers the great changes that took place under Saul, David, and Solomon in the way of construction activity, building with wood and stone, one wonders what training the Israelites had had to make them artisans of worth to the skilled workmen sent in by Hiram.

In the records of other peoples we learn a great deal about the industrial activities of all classes of society. In works upon Sumer, in Sir Leonard Woolley's *Ur of the Chaldees*, in the Code of Hammurabi, and in the Egyptian records we find information that helps us to understand how it was possible to raise such monuments as the Step Pyramid of Zoser, the palace of Mari, and the wondrous edifices that must have been raised in Susa, Nippur and other places that existed before the Flood of Noah's time.

I know of no work the student can search in which he will find a description of the effect upon the Israelite tribes of moving into the cities, the houses and the fields of their foes. We are told the booty was so useful and plentiful that the captors had practically nothing to do. From this we may infer that the able-bodied captives became serfs. Perhaps this deleterious change developed into an economic canker that made for the undoing of all the utopian plans for inheriting a land in which they would "eat bread without scarceness." This was aggressive imperialism gone mad, and small wonder that the Judges had such troublous periods.

Why is it there is so little said in the Books of Judges, Chronicles and Kings of what this change meant from arduous warfare for long years to the enervating periods of enjoyment of the good things of life that they did not produce? The utilitarians of the nineteenth century, who preached self-help, might have taken for their texts the example of the indolent Israelites, but they neglected in their churches and in their homes to expatiate upon it, fearing perhaps that it might be sacrilegious to question any such statement in Books of Holy Writ.

Nevertheless, whatever the reasons have been for the omissions of the editors of the eighth and sixth centuries B.C., we as students are left to supply these deficiencies and point what moral comes to the mind. How the Judges themselves could have expected their charges to settle down in village, farm, and city, clear away the debris of war, with the intention of repairing what was damaged, and apply themselves to the work of producing the essentials of subsistence is a riddle no author I have read pretends to answer. Nothing but deterioration could follow from such a course, and perhaps this is the reason why we are told so little about the Israelites as artisans and craftsmen in the utilitarian activities.

CHAPTER XX

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AFTER THE SETTLEMENT

We have now reached a period of startling moment in the affairs of the tribes. A crisis has been slowly developing, which threatens the destruction of the original purpose of the settlement. It was to enjoy a land in peace that would yield the good things of material existence. Milk and honey were the least of these benefits that would accrue to them, if they kept the Law.

Few of the biblical scholars have dealt with this period from an economic standpoint. Most of them devote themselves to the religious and the political changes that took place after the captives left Egypt. This important matter has been neglected due, perhaps, to their faulty knowledge of economic fundamentals.

In trying to pick up the broken threads of the history of the movements of the tribes, we shall encounter several points of contention, which have not been resolved by these experts. These matters foreshadow the crisis that arises in the days of Samuel. We hear no more about the nomadic instincts of the children of Israel, and that is not strange, for for four generations (four hundred years?) in Egypt there was no chance to wander far behind herds and flocks. During the forty years in the desert there is no reference to the old way of life, roaming in the open with herds and flocks, from pasture to pasture according to the seasons of the year. We might then say that when the tribes were settled, the nomadic instinct was dead.

There are, however, occasional suggestions that not every member of the tribes had lost this desire to lead the nomadic life. Before the crossing of the Jordan, the tribes of Gad and Reuben sent a petition to Joshua, asking that they might remain on the east side of the river, where they had found pasture for their herds and flocks. This was granted, on condition that the two tribes should contribute their share of soldiers to the armies that were to besiege Jericho. This is the only instance of a desire for a nomadic life since the days of captivity in Egypt.

Hence, there should be no doubt about the economic conditions of a settled life, which were imposed upon the tribes allotted sections of Canaan. If we are to understand the gravity of the crisis that arose at the time of Samuel, it is necessary for us to look a little deeper into the question of the settlement and try to ascertain the amount of land given to each family or the acreage that would be enclosed by landmark. All the information we are given about the extent of the holdings is that the large family will have more than the small one.

There are inferences in the Books of the prophets about the coming of the debt pillar. But as this is to be gleaned only from the wording of certain passages, it cannot be taken as an established institution, such as we read about in the annals of Greece and Rome. Nevertheless, it may be assumed that the beginning of economic crisis was not unlike that which brought disaster to the two great empires. The weariness or physical disability of the cultivator might have been one cause of losing a holding; another might be set down to the loss of working sons taken for the army. There are many other reasons for it, and I daresay the Bible reader can take the hint and think them out for himself.

Once we grasp the significance of the economic changes that came to the original settlement, we shall the better understand the many verses in the works of the prophets and, particularly in the Book of Job, concerning the removal of the landmark. We read in Job 24:1-4:

> Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?
>
> Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.
>
> They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.
>
> They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together.

Here we find the difference between the utopian plan adumbrated by the theorists and how it works out in practice.

There are passages in the Apocrypha and two in the Talmud and other Jewish commentaries concerning the difficulties of the payment of tithe. I know of only one work that treats this important problem in a thoroughly expert way, *The Economic Background of the Gospels*, by Frederick C. Grant.[1] This book was published over thirty years ago, and the author shows clearly that the priestly class increased their exactions almost to the ruin of the producers. What was laid down at the beginning as first-fruits to go as tithe to the Levites became, even before the time of Samuel, one of the contributing causes to the crisis that threatened to wreck the whole system.

There is another matter we should consider, and it is the demands that were made upon the people to attend the feasts. The call to celebrate at the places of sacrifice was general, but how men of the soil could leave their holdings to take, in some cases, a journey of three days there and three days back indicates that the compilers and editors knew little about farming. Herds and flocks need attention every day, and tares can multiply in the arable fields and gardens mightily in a week. However, these are only a few of the difficulties of producers that caused the crisis which threatened to wreck the tribal system of settlement.

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[1] Oxford University Press, 1926.

Why the people imagined that out of this turmoil a king would mend matters defies the understanding. Indeed, the prophecy of Samuel warned them that worse would come if they made Saul king. Further, we learn that even Yahweh himself eventually was sorry for the change.

Before we reach this turning point in the national affairs of Israel, we should reflect carefully upon the salient features gathered from the Books of Exodus and Joshua. The student may be forgiven for thinking that, taking them as a whole, the information is somewhat chaotic, abounding in many contradictions and other cross purposes.

It may be said that many of the scholars, in their interpretations of the period from the escape from Egypt to the last battle of Joshua have treated with slight consideration some of the complicated aims foreshadowed by Moses. One purpose plainly set forth in Exodus and Deuteronomy is the order for the tribes, when the settlement has taken place, that they should become a kingdom of priests. There is no indication anywhere of a political system, neither monarchical nor republican. It is well that we should not overlook the advice that Jethro gave to Moses. The high priest of the Kenites, the father-in-law of Moses, suggested to Moses the scheme of an orderly settlement under a juristic system of devolution of authority, which is in many respects in practice to this day. Jethro was a far-seeing man, and we regret the compilers and editors of the eighth century B.C. did not inform us how his system worked among his own people.

Think once more of the instructions that he gave to Moses, for we shall need to have these in mind when we review the contents of the Book of Judges. Here is the advice of the high priest of the Kenites:

> And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?
>
> And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God:
>
> When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws.
>
> And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good.
>
> Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.
>
> Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God:
>
> And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.
>
> Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them,

> to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:
>
> And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.
>
> If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace (Exod. 18:14-23).

What is surprising in this advice is the omission of any reference to the Levites, the priesthood. It seems to be purely legal. Judges are to be rulers, and their jurisdiction concerns the economic and social affairs of the people. There is no hint at all that these rulers are to be military men. Was it to be a form of anarchism, that is, an order free of political domination?

When we reflect upon the nature of the advice given to Moses by a high priest whose god was afterwards worshiped by the Israelites, we should realize how fair the prospect of the future was for the newcomers to the land of promise. Alas, even Israelites are men, and they are capable of undermining or overthrowing the best of systems, to their own detriment.

With these leads to the aim and purpose of Moses and Jethro, we pass to another vital order that has been grievously overlooked by the critics of the past generation. That which Dean Milman, in his *History of Israel*, considered of serious import has been neglected by those who have devoted themselves to the religious rituals and sacramental offices, that have a much later date. It is now that we have to search our minds for the most significant command that was given to the settlers, once they occupied the Land of Canaan.

It is laid down in Deuteronomy, oddly enough, that "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark" (19:14). Only one or two of the higher critics think it worth a slight reference, probably because they do not understand that it was an ancient law then and that under the code of Hammurabi its violation merited the most severe punishment, not only for the violator, but for his progeny.

Here we come upon one of those peculiar provisions for economic order that applies only to the Israelites. They were under fearful penalties to adhere strictly to this law. It is one of the severest violations in the curse chapter (27:17). The student who went to a Bible class sixty years ago was in a far better position then to understand the inner meaning of this than the man of today, for the burning political question in England was the reform of the land laws. He had access to several scholarly works upon this very problem; one that had a large circulation was Frederick Verinder's *My Neighbour's Landmark.*[2] Another read by many of the working men in England was Ignatius Singer's *The Rival Philosophies of Jesus and of Paul*, in which the author dealt with the sanctity of the landmark.

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[2] London, Andrew Melrose, 1911; 4th ed. published by Henry George Foundation of Great Britain, London, 1940.

It was here the Bible-class student of sixty years ago discovered that ministers in church and chapel seemed to be helpless to explain clearly why they ignored the religious interpretation of what this meant to the landless. And it was to some extent this dearth of information from the leaders of religious bodies that turned him adrift from the churches and sent him into the Brotherhood Movement.

We cannot close our minds to the fact that appears from this that one of the chief causes of friction among the settlers was the removal of the boundary stone and the enlargement of plots. The causes of these problems might have been debt, illness or death. In the case of the widow or a woman with a disabled man, assistance would be required, and this would have to be purchased, no doubt. Reasons for the economic change that took place may be multiplied by anyone who has studied the land movements in England and Scotland.

Some of the higher critics point out the lack of information we have concerning the duties of the Levites. It would be wrong to class them in the order of the Judges, for they were given the cities, and as they were not producers of wealth, we may surmise that they soon became landlords and enjoyed the privileged position of collecting rent. For it should be remembered that they had an additional grant of land in the suburbs about the cities. Hence, the complaints against the exactions that increased from this time on as to the tithe. The scholars who have given us works in recent years hold many different, conflicting ideas about the troubles of the period of the Judges. But I have not yet found in any of them the slightest enlightenment of their concern in the economic result of the settlement. They most assuredly give us their interpretations of the conduct of religious affairs. But scarcely a word of how the settlers were faring.

It is, however, quite different when we take up these works to discover their interpretations of the surprising changes that took place in the administration of civil order during the period of the Judges. And as we shall have to determine for ourselves the reasons why the advice Jethro gave to Moses on this matter was not carried out, we may first gather some idea from five of the most recent critics. Now let us see what that eminent scholar, Robert Pfeiffer, has to say about this:

> . . . The Hebrew word, translated "judges" (shōphetîm), has a wider meaning than in English. In our book it does not refer to arbitrators or to the presiding officers of a court of justice, but to the men performing a twofold function. First they heroically delivered their people from the oppression of their enemies, then they ruled dictatorially until their death. . . .[3]

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[3] *Introduction to the OT*, p. 314.

Dr. Noth in his review of the period tells us:

> . . . The only all-Israel office explicitly mentioned in the oldest Old Testament tradition was not a priestly but a judicial office.[4]

Dr. Edmond Jacob introduces us to the duty of a father of a family to instruct his children in matters of the Law. He says:

> . . . In the time of the Judges the head of the family is still priest at the same time; but the presence of a Levite gave a greater prestige to the religious celebration. . . .[5]

In this respect the parent was an ever constant teacher of the Law, and we may suppose that Torah was read in the family circle as often as the Bible was read in the homes of religious people in England during the nineteenth century.

The view of Dr. Edward Robertson concerning the duty of the Levite will be found in his lecture, "The Period of the Judges: A Mystery Period in the History of Israel," published in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library:*

> . . . The high-priest seems unaccountably to have vanished from the scene in the account given of this period. . . . The only mention of a priest in Judges comes in connection with the idolatrous Micah . . . no connection with the judges. The absence of any professional and organised priesthood seems evident, also, from the fact that in the book laymen are depicted as offering sacrifice. . . . Wellhausen stressed this point: "In the kernel of the Book of Judges there nowhere occurs a single individual whose profession is to take charge of the cultus."[6]

One of the reasons for rejecting the scheme Jethro gave to Moses concerning the Judges is set forth by S. Moscati in *Ancient Semitic Civilizations:*

> . . . In moments of crisis local chieftains arose as leaders; these were the Judges, who have given their name to a period of Hebrew history which may be put as covering approximately the two centuries which followed the occupation of Palestine. . . .[7]

Diversity of opinion is unquestionably stimulating in a matter of this order, but unless it helps to clarify the extraordinary confusions to be found in the Book of Judges, it becomes no more than a fascinating intellectual exercise. What we should like to have more information about is the process which made military captains out of civil attorneys.

To my mind the cause of this change was brought about by the realization on the part of the leaders of Israel that they were beset on all sides by enemies who feared their occupation of Canaan and the strength it gave to them. The camel-breeding powers to the east of Jordan periodically pressed their claims and took the lands they wanted.

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[4] *Hist. of Israel*, p. 101.

[5] *Theology of the OT*, p. 247.

[6] Vol. 30, No. 1, Oct. 1946, p. 4.

[7] *Loc. cit.*, p. 127.

It is no easy task for the curious student to find in the Old Testament or in the interpretations of the Bible experts a sound economic reason for the selection of Palestine as the Promised Land. Its geographical position was certainly not advantageous to a people who had to exterminate those who possessed it before Abraham came down from Damascus. Yet, when we think of this we are at a loss to light upon another place for a home for the Israelites. Who would have thought that there would be wars and more wars after Joshua was laid to his rest? The fond hopes of the promoters of the settlement came to naught. Only for very short periods were the swords sheathed after each defeat and victory. And yet there was a period, so we are told, of forty years' rest. Surely that meant rest from martial conflict. Whether there was rest among the tribes, and the cultivators of the plots enjoyed their produce is quite another matter. Indeed, there are hints that all did not go well with them when they were free from warlike engagements.

It cannot be said that characterization of the chief figures that crossed the stage since the days of Moses was a strong point in the art of the compilers and editors when they put together these early books. Moses is the chief of the personages described in what may be called a full-length portrait. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph have been mentioned by the higher critics as figures that have characteristics out of the common. To my mind Jacob and Joseph, after Abraham, are two whose lineaments are recognizable and reveal the thought and action of individuals.

Aaron, the priest, and Joshua, the man, are shadowy figures as they move across the stage of Israel's history. In the case of the latter, we have nothing to enable us to envisage him as a man or a commander. The reader is left to draw his own conclusions of what these religious and military chiefs were like.

The same criticism serves for the people mentioned in Judges. And after a close study of the seventh book of the Old Testament, it might be said that the title is a misnomer. One of the principal figures seems to be Micah, but he and his misdemeanor are isolated incidents that in no way bear upon the fortunes or misfortunes of the tribes. That he offends Yahweh by making an idol of silver is not an unusual failing, for many before him were guilty of the same backsliding.

It is something of a relief to turn to the Books of Samuel, for this high priest was at the center of affairs, and to some extent responsible for the overthrow of the original system proclaimed by Moses: that of a kingdom of priests. But before we deal with the first kingmaker of Israel, we might ask why Eli, his predecessor, is treated so lightly in the Old Testament record. We should like to know more about what happened during his long tenure of office. He had two unworthy sons who brought his house to disrepute, and we learn that after the defeat of Israel by the Philistines and the sacred objects were captured, the shock of the news killed him.

Samuel was a Judge after the heart desire of Jethro. The story that is told of his itinerary reads like one of a judge of this day in England who, in the provinces, is making the assize circuit. Samuel certainly was not a military man. As high priest he coupled with it the duties of a judge in touch with the common folk.

He stands out in the forefront of the picture of the events of that time as a seer and prophet. His warning to the people of what would happen to them if they made Saul king was one that might have been heeded by many nations that have desired a monarch instead of a priest as ruler.

We are surprised to learn that it was the "elders" of Israel who made the demand for a king (I Sam. 8:4). The economic and moral condition of the people when Samuel became high priest was at a low ebb. After long years of war, what else could be expected? More than this, they lost the guidance of Yahweh. We read in I Samuel:

> And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.
>
> According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee (I Sam. 8:7-8).

We gather from this that Samuel had to undertake the most formidable task that is recorded of any high priest. That his wisdom went for naught does not surprise us. History is a record of the fact that men never know when they are well off. What might have been a land of milk and honey became one of bloodshed, and after the enthronement of Saul, no matter what were the glories of his successors, the doom of the people was writ large when they abandoned the original intention of a kingdom of priests and imagined the enthronement would solve their problems.

CHAPTER XXI

THE FIRST KING

The history of the Israelites, from the time of Abimelech to the period when one king ruled over the land, deals with the affairs of the tribes in the southern portion of the country. The affairs of Naphtali, Zebulon and Issachar, to the north, receive scant notice. Interest in them seems to have faded away. All we do know is that intermarriages took place and there were few local wars. Perhaps the people in these areas had had enough of strife and decided to go to work and cultivate the land.

The conditions that prevailed are described for us in a passage found in the *Introduction to the Old Testament*, by Professor Robert Pfeiffer, in which he says:

> . . . The shocking stories of public and private lawlessness in Judg. 17-21 are told for the purpose of showing how urgent was the need for a king's central authority: "in those times there was no king in Israel." To be sure, a king could not have prevented crime itself, but such a state of anarchy among the separate tribes, who acted without regard to a national policy, would at least not have existed under a monarchy. . . .[1]

The Book of Ruth is an insertion, which breaks the course of the historical narrative we have followed in Judges. Its relationship to the events of the quarreling tribes is far to seek, although it takes place in the time of the Judges and during a famine. Naomi, her husband, and their two sons had migrated to the land of Moab. The sons marry two Moabitic women, and after the husbands die, Naomi determines to return to Bethlehem with the daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah.

As a story, it has a perfect gem of a plot, characterization, and fulfillment. It is permeated with a glow of natural impulses, which redeem men and women from the frailties flesh is heir to. There are few idyls in the literature of ancient Greece that can match it. Here the art of omission is skillfully practiced, and what is left to the imagination heightens the interest in the tale. Dr. Sidney Smith remarks, "It is unique in one respect, that the two main characters are women—not queens, like Esther, or Jezebel. There is no such treatment of women in any early stories known to me."

What a relief it is to read it after the turmoil described in Judges. What a change in scene and action! Farming—a glimpse of what might have been. We are taken to Moab and then back to Bethlehem, where the farmers are harvesting the barley. We meet Boaz, a farmer with a fixed holding; not a shepherd, a dweller in tents.

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[1] *Introduction to the OT*, p. 321. For a discussion of this question, *see* A. R. Johnson, "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship," in *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, edited by S. H. Hooke, Oxford, 1958, pp. 204-36.

The reader who is curious about the opinions of Bible scholars concerning the Book of Ruth cannot do better than read the fine description of it in an essay by Professor Edward Robertson, which appeared in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*.[2] Professor Robertson explains the vicissitudes and trials of Naomi, and supplies information about the marriage laws and the observances of descent, which are lacking in the story itself. In summary, he says:

> And, permeating the book, as a sweet savour, is the deep satisfaction that all human nature the world over feels in the triumph of weakness over strength. It is the response to the cravings of the human heart beset by forces that bear heavily upon it—out of weakness being made strong—the weak things of the world confounding the things that are mighty.[3]

It is a short book, and tells an interesting tale. After the marriage of Ruth and Boaz, she bore him a son, Obed, who became the grandfather of David. The book ends with a genealogy of David.

Philistia was the great thorn in the flesh of the Israelites to the south, and the exploits of Saul are recorded in a mixture of legend and fact. The one significant event in this period was the coronation of Saul as king of Israel. He is described in I Samuel 9:2:

> . . . a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

Thus began the organization of Israel under a king acceptable to the people, and he ruled for forty years. But there were few periods of peace for the economic development of the country. War with the Philistines kept the armies on the move, and it may be surmised that the best of the youth were taken into the ranks.

These early experiments in kingship are not without their lessons. A monarch who is given full powers, such as we suppose were given to Saul, may become a dictator at will. There seems to have been no restraining influence at all, such as the English witenagemot, a council of advisers. Nor do we learn of any so-called constitutional laws limiting the power of the monarch, set forth during the reign of Saul, David or Solomon, covering a period of 120 years.

[2] Vol. 32, No. 2, March 1950.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 228.

It is just as well to note these facts, for they contribute to the causes that brought disaster and captivity to the people. Perhaps the jealousies and the quarrels of the tribes, which marked the period of the Judges, were still rife during the reign of Saul, and there was no hope of unifying them.

A word must be said here about the differences in viewpoint expressed in I Samuel. The attitude taken toward the idea of monarchy is set forth in two diametrically opposed passages. In one place Yahweh himself orders Samuel to anoint Saul, as a means of delivering the Israelites out of the hands of the Philistines (I Sam. 9:15 ff.); in another, the king is sent to them as a punishment for their ingratitude (8:9 ff.). The famous harangue of Samuel to the people who called upon him to find a king for them was prophetic. Probably, being imbued with the conditions of the covenant, he held firmly to the idea of Israel being a kingdom of priests. He warned them of the trials and tribulations they would suffer, but they took no heed. He said:

> . . . This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.
>
> And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.
>
> And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.
>
> And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.
>
> And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.
>
> And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.
>
> He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.
>
> And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day (I Samuel 8:11-18).

This was to lead to penal servitude for forty years. The course of statecraft has never run smoothly. We soon learn of frictions that arose between Samuel and Saul. The warnings of the wise old kingmaker were beginning to be fulfilled, and it was not only Samuel who rebuked the king for his sinfulness; Yahweh himself regretted the choice and "repented that he had made Saul king over Israel" (I Samuel 15:35).

This crisis in the affairs of the realm was so grave that Yahweh dispatched Samuel to Bethlehem to seek out Jesse. However, he was afraid that Saul would kill him if he knew of the errand. But Yahweh advised him to take a heifer to sacrifice as a ruse, and when he reached the neighborhood of Jesse, he offered it up and called the elders of the city to take part in the ceremony.

The story of the presentation of the seven sons of Jesse to Samuel is told so simply that a sympathetic reader might feel that he is one of the gathering. The appearance of the youths does not satisfy Samuel that he has found the one he is seeking, and he asks Jesse, "Are here all thy children?" And the reply was, "There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold, he keepeth the sheep." And Samuel said unto Jesse, "Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down until he come hither" (16:11).

> And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.
>
> Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward . . . (16:12-13).

Saul was afflicted with an evil spirit imposed by Yahweh:

> And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.
>
> Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. . . .
>
> And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer. . . .
>
> And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him (16:15-16, 21, 23).

This incident of David playing to the soul-distressed Saul has a deeper significance than is sometimes attributed to it. To my mind, it is more than just a passing incident that had no particular importance in the crisis, political and religious, through which the king was passing. It marks signally the inauguration of a class of music, which differs entirely from that of earlier periods described in the songs of Deborah and Miriam. Indeed, to me it seems like the harbinger of the musical genius that is ascribed to David, not only in verse, but in song. During his reign the chorale is developed and becomes a part of the worship, not only of the Temple and the tabernacle, but also at other festivals.

Music undoubtedly has great power to soothe the savage breast. It has done wonders to relieve the aching mind and the distressed soul of countless millions, and I think it is to this period of Saul and David we should look for the practice becoming general with the people. The Pythagoreans held the power of music to be of magical character. Aristoxenos said they "employed music to purge the soul as they used medicine to purge the body."

However, it is in the myth of Orpheus that we find a description of its powers that runs the gamut of the universe. Lemprière in the *Classical Dictionary* tells us:

> . . . He [Orpheus] received a lyre from Apollo, or according to some, from Mercury, upon which he played with such a masterly hand that even the most rapid rivers ceased to flow, the savage beasts of the forest forgot their wildness, and the mountains came to listen to his song. All nature seemed charmed and animated, and the nymphs were his constant companions. . . .[4]

When he sought his beloved in hell, he was permitted to enter the palace of Pluto:

> . . . The king of hell was charmed with the melody of his strains, and according to the beautiful expressions of the poets, the wheel of Ixion stopped, the stone of Sisyphus stood still, Tantalus forgot his perpetual thirst, and even the Furies relented. . . .

Through the centuries our debt to the disciples of David has grown to such an extent that music has become a universal tongue and speaks in the same accents to all the people of the western world.

It would be hard to imagine what life would be without it. When we think of Bach's *B Minor* and the *St. Matthew Passion*, and how these masterpieces have been cherished by the people, we feel a reverence for the composer that has deepened generation after generation. And who, knowing the magic of a great choral work, can forget hearing Handel's *Messiah?* There are many other works of orchestra and chorus that have mysteriously eased many a weary mind and acted like balm upon a soul distressed.

The legends of Hercules and Jason tell of mighty deeds but they do not compare with that of David and Goliath. A simple shepherd lad, the youngest of Jesse's sons, was not only a skilled harpist, but a valiant slayer of ferocious beasts. He had slain a lion and a bear that threatened to devour a lamb out of his flock. But these feats are overshadowed in importance by his conquest of the giant, clad in almost invulnerable armor. Goliath was "six cubits and a span" in height; and he had a helmet on his head and wore a coat of mail which weighed "five thousand shekels of brass." "And his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron," and a shieldbearer went before him; an ironclad foe. But David, as he is portrayed in marble by Michelangelo, is arrayed in only a loincloth. Saul had equipped him in armor, but he cast it off. When he approached Goliath, he took a stone from his bag, placed it in his sling, and taking aim, hurled it at the forehead of the giant and laid him low.

There is no other story of the rapid rise of a hero that exceeds this in dramatic glory. David, having no sword, ran to the fallen giant and took his from the sheath and cut off his head. The Philistines being demoralized by this great feat, fled in disorder.

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[4] *Loc. cit.*, p. 464.

It is surprising to find that the harpist who exorcised the evil spirit in Saul was not recognized. Saul inquired of Abner, his captain, whose son the "stripling" was. Abner "brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand," and when Saul asked him whose son he was, David answered, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite" (17:58).

There was great jubilation after the defeat of the Philistines, and the consequences of it aroused the demon of jealousy in the king. We are told:

> . . . The women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick.
>
> And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands (18:6-7).

After this Saul made several attempts to get rid of David. He planned to have him killed, but Jonathan, his son who loved David, warned him of his father's intentions.

The plot against David was one of many directions, and the idea of Saul to give one of his daughters in marriage to David is not the least interesting part of the story. Yet, the resources of the Philistines had not run out. They were reorganized several times with surprising strength, and finally defeated the Israelites. Saul was wounded by an arrow and asked his armorbearer to take his sword and slay him, so that he would not be captured by the enemy. The command was not obeyed, for the armorbearer was afraid to kill the king. Then Saul took his own sword, fell upon it and died.

Some of the Bible scholars are inclined to treat lightly the loss of spiritual strength in Saul. They seem to be in search of manifestations of political power directed toward the organization of the nation. How consolidation of the tribes could be brought about by appeasement and intrigue is not disclosed. Saul failed in governing his own family, and whatever material exploits can be set down to his credit, the end of his reign is evidence of an utter deterioration of the main purpose of the invasion of Canaan and the pacification of the quarrelsome tribes of Israel. The promise given to Moses by the children that they would obey the commandments is forgotten. Both king and subjects broke the commandments at will and, although Yahweh punished them severely, reform did not last long, and they seemed to ask for more punishment.

Samuel underestimated the dire tribulations that would come to the Israelites if they chose a king. After forty years of a reign that promised no peace for the tribes south of the line of Samaria, the circumstances of the Israelites after the death of Saul were no better than they were when the rule of the Judges came to an end.

During the two centuries of the Judges, there were many warlike expeditions and conquests among the tribes, attacks by nomads, and wars with Ammon and Moab. Periods of rest were followed by periods of oppression. Pfeiffer gives us the following chronology:

> . . . The rule of the individual judges comprised 226 years, and the periods of oppression amounted to 111 years. The whole period from the death of Joshua to that of Samson lasted 337 years; 480 years elapsed from the Exodus from Egypt to the building of the Temple of Solomon. . . .[5]

In reading this account of the conflict, we gather that the heirs of those who followed Joshua into the land of milk and honey had no easy life.

What lay behind the history of kingship? Many, many centuries must have passed before the people reached a stage when there was no possible chance of agreement among them; hence their desire to have one whose law had to be kept, one who had the power to punish evildoers. It is useless to go into the old controversial idea of this desire. We might as well say at once that it was always the other man who was guilty of the offense and merited fine, imprisonment or death. Two persons, quarreling, might desire an arbitrator but for different reasons. The best example of this is given in the Books of Samuel. When the elders went to him and asked for a king, they could not agree among themselves; and as for one section trusting the other to do what was right, it was out of the question. They wanted a "ruler," which is a better term than king for the man chosen. For kings were men and not gods, although they were anointed and had divine power bestowed upon them by the priests.

Still, the history of it shows clearly that soon after the coronation the new condition was no better than the old one. The prophecy that Samuel gave to the people, in which he told them clearly what would happen to them if they appointed a king, could be applied to hundreds of dynasties, even down to our own time. This seems like a confession of a people that they cannot rule themselves. Therefore, the strong arm of a divinely appointed man—one of themselves—is necessary, as they think, to make order out of disorder and to rule with a firm hand.

[5] *The Books of the OT*, p. 126.

CHAPTER XXII

THE REIGN OF DAVID

The first time we learn about David is in I Samuel 16:11. He was the youngest son of Jesse, a shepherd who lived a few miles from Bethlehem, south of Jerusalem. He tended his father's sheep and was a true son of the patriarchal line, for Abraham, Jacob and Saul also had their flocks.

The genealogy of this youth is referred to in the Book of Ruth, in which we learn that he stemmed from Boaz and Ruth; and Ruth gave birth to Obed, the father of Jesse. How much reliance can be placed upon these genealogies has been a perplexing matter for the historical scholars. There can be no doubt about the inventions of genealogists of a far later date in tabulating the family trees of the great figures in the history of Israel up to this time. It is quite understandable that the chroniclers felt it necessary to give to their great personages a direct line of descent from Abraham and Jacob, but many of their efforts in this way may be regarded as interpolations. Apart from this difficulty of determining descent, the story of David has a semblance of reality which cannot be denied.

However, he is the most troublesome character in the biblical gallery to present to the reader. His versatility is extraordinary for a country-bred lad. As it is so often difficult, even in later times, to portray a many-sided man with his virtues and defects, so is it in this case a troublesome matter to select the most important of his achievements for consideration.

He was described as a beautiful boy (i.e., without blemish) when he was selected by Samuel to succeed Saul. At that time he was a musician—an exceptional one—for if we are to attribute to him some of the Psalms, he wrote the verse, set it to music and sang it, an accomplishment rarely reached by the greatest composers of the Christian Era. That this was unusual is strikingly evident because no other shepherd of whom we have record was a harpist. They were players of the pipes, but no musician has been able to pipe and sing at the same time. This may be a reason why he took to the harp, and we might alter Scott's line to say of him,

> The first of all the bards was he
> That sang of Israel's chivalry.

But what is of great significance in this story is that his fame as a harpist spread abroad and was known by the courtiers of Saul. Whether or not David had his harp with him when he was presented to Samuel to be anointed with oil is not reported. Possibly like the minstrel boy, he carried it slung over his shoulder, for the instrument was then a third of the size of the present one. It was as close to him as his cloak and was indeed a pass-word, as it were, that admitted its bearer to tabernacle and court. We have forgotten how the bard was respected, nay reverenced, in the days when he sang to kings and queens, high priests and warriors, the legends of the people and kept alive in their minds the memories of the great deeds done by their forefathers.

In thinking about the survival of national myths and ancient legends, I have often wondered to what extent in folklore we owe their survival to the bard, his singing and his harp. Our northern sagas were undoubtedly kept alive in this way and our Celtic stories are full of passages about these storytellers.

David's fame as a player brought him to the aid of Saul, who was stricken with an evil spirit. The beautiful youth's tuneful music was so effective that it purged away his sore affliction. Before this took place, he had won the heart of the king, who made him his armorbearer. Such advancement for a shepherd youth was extraordinary. He must have been a prodigy who went on from one achievement to another with success. The story of Goliath has been told too often to be recounted here, but the defeat of the Philistines brought all Israel to his feet.

The story of the ass, as we find it in the Old Testament, is associated in a curious way with royalty. The beast of burden has a dignified part to play. The fathers of two kings were herdsmen, who raised sheep and goats together with asses, we may assume. Saul was dispatched to find the asses that had strayed away from his father's fold. After a long search he met Samuel, the seer, who told him, "As for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found" (I Sam. 9:20).

Thus, the search for the animals terminated in Samuel's epoch-making act, when he took "a vial of oil, and poured it upon his [Saul's] head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance" (I Sam. 10:1)?

Jesse, the father of David, was also a breeder of asses, sheep and goats. When the courtiers of Saul realized that the king was troubled by an evil spirit, they sent for David, the harpist, to come and play before the ruler. In I Sam. 16:20 we read: "And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul."

The references in the Old Testament to asses and goats being reared among cattle and sheep seem to indicate a use for them for which herds and flocks were not practical. In the matter of vicarious sacrifice, the old witticism used to be: "Asses for the rider, goats for his sins."

The demand for scapegoats must have been great, for in chapter after chapter we read of the grievous sins of the people. In Leviticus we have a minute description of transferring sins to the head of a goat:

> And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat:
>
> And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness:
>
> And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness (Lev. 16:20-22).

We learn that this ceremony was a very old one. Kurt Seligmann, in *The History of Magic*, tells us:

> . . . Before the Hebrews could give themselves over to the Feast of the Tabernacles and its joys, a purification rite had to be performed on the preceding Day of Atonement. The high priest cast lots over two he-goats, one falling to Yahweh, the other to Azazel. They offered up the Lord's goat in the usual manner, but the scapegoat, that was Azazel's, they sent into the wilderness with the sins of Israel. The suffix *el* (lord) suggests that in an earlier age Azazel had been a deity, perhaps a local god of primitive Semitic tribes. On being discarded as a god, Azazel was banished to the wilderness as an unclean being, an object of scorn, upon which the people might purge their misdeeds.[1]

I am informed that this ancient custom is no longer practiced by priests of any of the denominations. Still, sometimes when a war is taking place, nationalists heap all their sins upon their foes without the loss of a goat.

David's business acumen was revealed early in his career. The long account in Samuel of the affair with Nabal, the owner of three thousand sheep and a thousand goats (I Sam. 25:2) is typical of his commercial ability. The way the narrative is told leaves us in a quandary, because it is not easy to separate what seems to have been good intentions from an ulterior purpose. As it reads, he could have had no notion of the attractiveness of Nabal's wife, Abigail, and we may accept the notion that she was a surprise to him. Nevertheless, the gain that came to him after the death of Nabal was a very large one.

At the same time he developed a political sense that was one of the outstanding traits of his character. He had married Saul's daughter, Michal, and had received emoluments from the king for his feats of arms, and had been given, besides, opportunities to learn the technique of the statecraft of the day. But owing to the troubles of Saul's reign, there was no room for gratitude among the ambitions of his son-in-law. So skillfully did he maneuver his way to the throne that he not only won the devotion of his people but the admiration of the king of Tyre.

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[1] New York, Pantheon Books, 1948, p. 55.

As a builder, he was an innovator and constructed the first buildings of wood of which we have record in Palestine, after the Israelites settled there. He selected Jerusalem as his capital because it was strongly fortified, and held an almost impregnable position from enemies north, south and east. There "he introduced new religious practices and started the policy of centralizing religion as well as administration in that capital."[2] He introduced many features of music at festivals, and on one occasion offended Yahweh by dancing in the sanctuary. But since Yahweh had overlooked so many of the failings of his favorites, David escaped punishments that had been meted out to others.

How we can ignore the affair with Bathsheba and Uriah cannot be explained. This shocking tragedy seems to have been passed over lightly by the chronicler. To seduce the wife of the Hittite and then to plan for Uriah's murder was certainly not in keeping with the conduct that might be expected of a king. Venality, passion, and licentiousness are not strange companions in the history of any age or people. But in the case of David, abject contrition for sins committed seems to have been sufficient to keep his memory green and somewhat sweet.

What a man! What a human creature! Musician, poet, harpist, dancer, and a politician as dexterous as any in all history; a builder and a contractor, a restorer of tabernacles and religious services. His prowess as a warrior and defender of his nation may be compared favorably to that of any other of whom we have record. Yet, all these triumphs have been relegated to a minor place in the record of his history, and he remains in the mind of many the poet and the singer of the Psalms.

Notwithstanding David's lament on hearing of the death of Saul, he was a king without merit and reigned in strife and pain. The story of the Amalekite in the opening chapter of II Samuel presents a different version of how he met his end. This is another instance of two or more compilers of the tales working separately, one not knowing what the other was writing (or one compiler giving two different versions, side by side). Yet, we cannot help but notice how strong was the desire of the authors for sensation. Both versions are told with the skill of a practiced dramatist, and even though our credence be strained at what we read, we appreciate the value of the tales as time-honored examples of fiction.

There is not a dull chapter in the second book of Samuel, and scarcely a verse that is not charged with action. Indeed, it rivals the *Iliad* for sustained interest. Bible students of fifty years ago found it hard to reconcile David, the keeper of sheep and asses, with the king who had taken at least seven wives and many concubines. The story of his first wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul, is strange enough in itself, for Saul sent his guards to arrest David on his wedding night, but with the help of Michal, he was able to escape. Saul gave his daughter to another, but in II Samuel she is summoned by David after he has married other women. We are told that she died childless (II Sam. 6:23).

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[2] Dr. Sidney Smith writes, "The variations of opinion [about David's innovations] are many, the main fact indisputable. The policy was never popular in all parts of the country; the civil wars in David's own reign were a consequence, and ultimately this caused the split."

She is the one female character who seems to have been devoted to him, but when she saw him uncovered, dancing before Yahweh, she admonished him:

> . . . How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!
>
> And David said unto Michal, It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord.
>
> And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.
>
> Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death (II Sam. 6:20-23).

One tragic episode follows another rapidly, and that of Uriah and Bathsheba is one of sheer wickedness. David saw her bathing and desired her. When he learned that she was with child, he conceived a plan to have her husband slain. It is not clear from the story whether David was responsible for her condition. Nathan, the prophet, said to David:

> Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon (12:9).

There are only three or four recordings in the book that are not related to the king's marital experiences and his wars. It is surprising how the locale shifts from place to place. Swiftly we are taken from the Euphrates to Damascus, and from Tyre to Judea. As it was under Joshua, the war bulletins describe the losses of the enemy but make no mention of casualties on the side of the armies of Israel.

It was the king of Tyre who built houses of cedar in David's realm: "And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house" (5:11). Since Hiram was also a contemporary of Solomon, there is a question of chronology here, and it is suggested either that it was Hiram's father who helped David or that the relations between him and Solomon have been anticipated.

Nevertheless, such a glimpse as this is a relief from the murk of the stories of the king's wives and wars. One of the most surprising statements is the following: "And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people" (8:15). The only reference to a peaceful pursuit is the following:

> Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table (9:10).

Is it possible for the biblical critic to imagine what a simple working man of average intelligence thought when he inquired about the stories of Saul and David? The questions were ruled out of order by some because the Bible was "divinely inspired" and its books were "Holy Scripture." Who, now, would expect such an inquirer to be satisfied with these replies?

Perhaps David is best remembered for his skill as a musician. There has been so little said of the practice of the art that the reader welcomes the references to be found in II Samuel:

> And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. . . .
>
> And David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.
>
> So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet (6:5, 14-15).

This is a description of perhaps one of the first performances of an orchestra given in a tabernacle. But dancing was no innovation in a religious ceremony, for it was one of the primitive forms of expressing thanksgiving.

These exceptional sidelights on building, music, instruments and dancing have not always been duly emphasized. Poets they had from the beginning, and cymbal players. Deborah and Miriam have given us songs that have enriched many a page in English literature:

> And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.
>
> And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea (Exod. 15:20-21).

When, however, we push our search for information concerning the fortunes of the three northern tribes, there is little to enlighten us recorded in the reigns of Saul and David. From the beginning of the settlement, the Galilean tribes seem to have maintained a certain degree of independence and autonomous government. But after the assassination of Ishbaal, the northern tribes swore allegiance to David at Hebron, and he became king of a united people. We know that David created a great empire extending beyond the confines of the Israelite State, and including a great part of Syria and Palestine. At the same time he maintained peaceful relations with King Hiram of Tyre and all the Phoenician cities.

Perhaps the reason for the isolation of the northern provinces may be attributed to the intermarriages of Israelites with Canaanites. In Judges we learn that they deserted Yahweh and worshiped the gods of Tyre and Sidon. But in David's time they joined the southern kingdom.

Political and military action during the reigns of Saul and David was confined to areas menaced by the Philistines, Ammonites and Arameans. We do not know whether soldiers for the armies of Saul and David were recruited from the northern lands. Yet, compulsory service must have been in force. Moreover, there is no reference to the government at Jerusalem drawing revenues from the northern tribes. Some of the most important questions about methods of administration, social and military, are completely overlooked. And as for the fiscal system by which the "coffers" of the Treasury were replenished, it is not mentioned. Was loot sufficient for these purposes?

As for the cultivation of the land, and by whom it was tilled, we learn little. Here and there we find in a verse a reference to captives condemned to be agricultural serfs. But there is no reason to suppose that the tent-dwellers of Israel were other than cattle raisers and moved their herds and flocks from pasture to pasture according to the season and the rainfall. Farming is something else. The growing of cereals for which northern Palestine was famous, the care of orchards, the growing of flax and vegetables, and the keeping of bees are industries of a fixed area, where the workers have a settled residence. Also, milk and honey are not urban products. Perhaps these people dwelt not in tents but in huts before such timber as cedar was brought from Lebanon to the southern districts.

The closing scenes of David's life were stained with tears, and grief was often a pillow for a troubled mind. The death of his son Absalom tore his heartstrings, and in his lament he forgot the treachery of his son.

After Bathsheba delivered the child, who was to become the successor of his father, we learn nothing about his youth or even that David thought of him. There is no passage which informs us that they met. But when David was failing and he knew his time was short, Bathsheba came to him to plead for her boy and bade the king to name him his successor. David granted her plea and proclaimed his son king of all Israel.

The paean of thanksgiving and penitence in II Samuel is an ecstatic outpouring of redemptive joy. Its imagery soars in grandeur and mounts from peak to peak like the course of the sun to its zenith.

Taboos and edicts do not promote obedience in the generality who find it hard to resist the temptation of the flesh and the devil. It is human to err, and in this respect the Israelites, like their foes, were not immune from the virus of sin. The experience of Moses in the desert should be quite sufficient for us to understand the trials of the Levites and why for the time being their efforts disappear from the record.

In reconsidering what we have read of the reigns of Saul and David, we find that scarcely anything has been given to us about the economic condition of the people. We wonder how in the area from Gaza, in the south, to Hazor, in the north, the peasants upon the land could produce much more than was consumed by the armies. For there seemed to be continuous fighting and, although casualties on the side of the Israelites are scarcely mentioned, we may assume battalions were depleted from one cause or another and replenishments were necessary. The new recruits might have been captives, but there is not a hint anywhere that they were used for that purpose. Hence, new drafts would have to be made from the families of the cultivators of the land. And the rations that would be taken for the fighting men would leave little for those who produced them.

In all this we hear nothing of the possessors of the cities. The Levites as a class are ignored, but we may assume that by this time they had become powerful proprietors of the land. No doubt there were great estates, and we may take the story of David and Nabal and Abigail as an example of stock-breeding on a large scale. The area of land required for 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats would form a large estate. And the care of pasturing and shearing would necessitate a small army of skilled herdsmen.

It is significant that the lot and plight of the common folk of Israel have been treated so cursorily, while the scholars have fixed their attention upon the religious and political events of these reigns. Perhaps this is explained by the lack of information in the texts themselves. All the fair promises made to the people when they settled in Canaan are ignored.

However, the charge of having no background in fundamental economics no longer stands, for Dr. Edmond Jacob in *Theology of the Old Testament* has given us a description of the economic-religious factors in the scheme of settlement, which reveals a desire to make plain the reasons why the utopian plan came to naught. He says:

> . . . The earth itself is charged with life, it makes the plants spring up without which man could not maintain his life . . . an earth which is the source of life because of a special manifestation of God in time and space. At a given time in history salvation is bound up with the possession of a certain land, for the land is indispensable for the maintenance of the covenant and the community.[3]

Here we have combined the economic and religious purposes of the Creator. Indeed, it may be said that history shows clearly that religion becomes an empty part of the life of the people when they are reduced to servitude and penury. How right Moses was in his conception of a happy people in the possession of "a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness." And it was scarceness of the staff of life that followed the making of kings.

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[3] *Loc. cit.*, p. 178.

That this is so will be made plain to us in Scripture when we come to the end of the reign of Solomon. The petition that was presented to his successor will tell the whole story of the impoverishment of the common folk.

CHAPTER XXIII

KING SOLOMON AND AFTER

It is difficult to explain the reason for the silence which covered the period from the birth of Solomon until he was proclaimed king by his father. There was some difference of opinion as to the heir apparent to the throne, and Bathsheba, his mother, entered into a palace intrigue with Nathan to have Solomon crowned before David's death. There is not a word about Solomon as a youth. His mother was presumably the king's favorite wife, and we may assume her position at court would entitle her son to use whatever means were available for fitting himself for some distinguished career. His activities after he began to rule indicate a training in diplomacy, architecture, and commerce. By marrying the daughter of a Pharaoh, he received Gezer as her dowry and secured his southern frontier from attack, as well as adding control of another trade route.

He must have been an unusual youth. Perhaps he thought things out for himself. In this we should not overlook the part of his mother Bathsheba. The verse that describes the beginning of the irregular union between David and Bathsheba may be read in two ways. It says:

> And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house (II Sam. 11:4).

This may imply that David forced her, but on the other hand the words "And she came in unto him" may mean that she was a willing party to the act. How is this vague statement to be taken? No word of protest is recorded, but that he took her before he lay with her indicates some unwillingness to grant David's desire. She could not have known at that time that she would become the wife of the king, and perhaps she never knew anything of the plot of David to have her husband slain. She might have believed that he fell in battle, as he did, but as the victim of a plot.

When she heard of the death of Uriah, she mourned for him. Perhaps Solomon took after his mother in much that formed his character. He was not in any particular like his father. He is pictured to us as a man of peace, and one who desired a settled life of constructive pursuits that would benefit the people.

There are differences of opinion among the Bible scholars about his spiritual worth, but nearly all of them admit prosperity returned to the kingdom of Judea under his rule. He built a magnificent palace in Jerusalem and a Temple of stone that was considered one of the wonders of that age.

What is of direct interest to us in casting a glance at his career is his policy concerning the Galilean tribes of the Israelites. We are led to believe that, although he, like David, ruled the twelve tribes, he left the northern ones in peace to go their way.

> And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile (II Kings 23:13).

What a falling off was this! The decrees of Yahweh were flouted, and idol worship was tolerated with alien nations, for the sake of insuring peace, extending commerce, and mollifying the desires of his wives. It must have been a welcome change for the merchants of the north, with their wares, to be able to travel the main land artery from Damascus to Egypt without the interruptions of warfare.

How Solomon earned the reputation of being the wisest man in the world is not clearly defined. Long generations of men of marital experience have considered that a wise one is a monogamist. It is strange, too, that, according to the record, he left so few sons. It may be that his seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines were nothing more than *figurantes* to decorate his court. For whatever purpose he collected them, it cannot be said that he obeyed the command "Be fruitful and multiply." In this regard, it is as well that we remind the reader that the editors and compilers of these events, long years after they took place, were inordinate multipliers. But, alas, many of their figures have been fruitful only in raising much controversy.

Our interest is aroused by the story of the peaceful relations that were forged between Hiram and David, and afterwards between Hiram and Solomon. In exchange for the valuable cedar wood of Lebanon and expert craftsmen, David probably rendered services in return. Solomon, in his time, concluded a treaty with the King of Tyre (I Kings 5:11), and for the timber Solomon agreed to pay Hiram "twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil . . . year by year."

Solomon needed the timber for his buildings and Hiram was glad to have the agricultural products in exchange. According to the account in I Kings 9:10-13, Hiram received twenty cities in western Galilee from Solomon, in payment for the cedar and the skilled workmen that he sent to Jerusalem for the building of the palace and the Temple. The land was known as "Kabul," which Josephus interpreted as meaning "unpleasing," giving the impression that Hiram was dissatisfied with the gift. However, Dr. Noth among modern scholars thinks it may be out of context.

Hiram and Solomon were also engaged in a joint maritime project. Solomon provided the fleet, while Hiram put the naval craftsmen and mariners at his disposal, and they shared the profits. The port for this enterprise was built by Solomon at Ezion-Geber (modern Elath), on the Gulf of Akaba.

In the case of the Queen of Sheba, we have another exchange taking place. The lavish articles that she brought into Judea for Solomon, according to the description in I Kings 10, were not imported for the purposes of commercial enterprise. They were purely and simply presents, as were also the munificent manufactures and products that Solomon gave to the Queen. They could not be regarded as objects of barter, for it is stated clearly in each case that they were gifts.

It is worth pointing out that Solomon paid the wages of Hiram's workmen in goods. (The coin as a general medium of exchange came at a much later date.) It is surprising to learn how far back this form of payment—wages in goods—is carried. It persisted in many countries up until the middle of the nineteenth century, and in books on the Corn Laws there will be found descriptions of houses built by workmen who were paid in bread. They were called Bread Rows. I have seen these unsightly buildings and what remained of bread ovens where the loaves were baked. It was as late as 1870 when the notorious truck system of payment was brought to an end in England.

These stories of commercial transactions attract the economist, but the wonder of it is that so many Bible scholars seem to be unaware of their significance. Perhaps the old idea of worldliness, sheer materialism and the worship of Mammon, have stifled the desire to make a thorough examination of the fundamental economics of the Bible. Still, let it be said here that there is a growing interest in this part of the work, and one author goes so far as to say there is a line running all the way through the Old Testament, which deals with fundamental economics and that it is not the least feature of the work. Several books have appeared in the past two decades, whose titles declare their subjects are devoted to the economic background of the Bible or the economic history of the Jews. This surely indicates an aroused interest in the complaints and protests against tribute, poverty and slavery, which we find in all the prophets.

The difference between the economic state and the political state seems not to be clearly understood by many of the Bible scholars. Several of them are under the impression that it would be simple to undo economic wrong if only the king was successful in his choice of administrators who would carry out his reforms. The lessons of this experience since the days of Saul should convince the student that the task is not as simple as it appears to be. The political State subsists on tribute. The king and his immediate servants are parasites. They do not produce food, fuel, clothing or shelter. They add nothing to the store of wealth; indeed, they squander it upon displays of military force and needless pageants.

Moses must have known this; indeed, it is made plain in several passages in Exodus, as I have pointed out above. To what extent his ideas were culled from former experiments cannot be determined, but the distinction between a political State and an economic one was clearly understood by much older civilizations than the Egypt of the days of Moses. Nearly all of which we have record used the boundary stone: "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark" (Deut. 27:17). Moses considered it a crime to break this law.

Moses was determined to settle a free people in the land of milk and honey. We may take it that he saw the depravities of slave labor. Hence, his desire for an economic State in which the people would produce their necessaries, and the land they used for this purpose would be sacrosanct. There is not a single political idea expressed by Moses.

When we come to the minor prophets, we hope to show that Amos, Haggai, Micah and Malachi left no doubt in our minds as to their understanding of the meaning of these words.

After the death of Solomon, the kingdoms were divided into two separate States. In the south, Judah and Benjamin were combined; in the north, ten tribes formed the New Israel, and bitter feeling was felt. Jeroboam in cultic matters followed "in the footsteps of David and Solomon."

> . . . According to I Kings 12:25 ff., he turned Bethel (and Dan?) into a royal sanctuary, erected two golden oxen in honour of Yahwe, appointed priests as royal officials in connection with them, and held at Bethel, as Solomon had held at Jerusalem (I Kings 8:65), a great harvest thanksgiving festival for Israel. The capital of the new kingdom was Shechem.[1]

Rehoboam, in crushing the revolt, regarded the Israelites as rebels. His response to the petition of Jeroboam is inexplicable. Jeroboam had been appointed by Solomon as the head of levies of laborers of the house of Joseph, the northern tribe. But objecting to taxation and service in the levy, he had revolted and fled to Egypt, the country of his mother. After Solomon's death, he returned to Tirzah, assembled all the tribes of northern Israel at Shechem, and asked Rehoboam, the successor of Solomon, to lighten the impositions and make life easier for the working people. The reply is one of arrogance and downright cruelty. Indeed, it is amazing to think that such a one could ever be given by even the bitterest tyrant. Rehoboam said:

> . . . My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions (I Kings 12:14).

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[1] Hermann Guthe, "Israel," *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, II, 2239.

This reply was given to the people who had prayed for relief, saying:

> Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee (I Kings 12:4).

This is quite a different picture from that which presented the rule of Solomon as one of prosperity and splendor. How the people fell into the lot of servitude and suffered impoverishment is not clearly stated, although we do hear of very heavy taxation (I Kings 10:14). Robert Pfeiffer tells us: "The author of Kings or a later glossator sets the yearly income from taxation at an incredible amount, 666 gold talents, or more than 25 million gold dollars, in addition to the toll raised on peddlers and caravans crossing his country."[2] Undoubtedly in the reign of the wisest king, vast economic changes for the worse may have taken place. The contrast between the condition of the petitioners and the daily rations needed for the court in the time of Solomon reveals that luxury destroys thrift and leads to direful results.

> And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal,
>
> Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl (I Kings 4:22-23).

And Dr. Pfeiffer remarks: "Solomon had 4,000 (*sic*, not 40,000) chariot horses and 12,000 cavalry horses."[3]

The next two centuries are rather obscure in the history of the people. But if we are to find causes for the disintegration of Israel and the captivity of the people, we shall have to look in many different directions for them. There are many gaps in the narratives of the Old Testament that only the imagination can attempt to fill. In looking back over the history after the death of Joshua and the settlement of the tribes, we realize how little information we have gathered about the economic advancement of the people themselves. We learn much about politics after the reign of Saul, and statecraft overshadows the work of the Levites in bringing about a kingdom of priests. But what the people were doing to provide themselves with the necessaries of existence is scarcely touched upon at all. This is no small matter, for Canaan was to be a land of milk and honey, and the people were to enjoy the good things of earth. The problem is not simplified by pointing out that the captives of conquered nations became serfs and labored for the Israelites.

In this connection, Professor Edward Robertson remarks:

> The whole structure of Hebrew government and officialdom, as is the case everywhere, rested ultimately on the people and it is just this

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[2] *Introd. to the OT*, p. 384.

[3] *Ibid.*

> stratum of the community which never clearly emerges in the pages of the Old Testament. Prophets, priests, kings, judges and other high officials come to life and pass before our eyes. But those over whom they ruled and whose lives they controlled and directed are hidden from us.

It is precisely for this reason that I have tried to stress at every point the economic forces and factors involved and have endeavored to lift the curtain to direct attention to the life of the ordinary man.

At the beginning of the settlement the tribes were permitted to take everything from the native peasants and install the Levites in the cities. May we infer from this that the newcomers were neither to toil nor spin? Others would work for them? If that inference will stand, we may surmise that idleness became a virtue and honest labor a thing to be shunned.

During the reigns of David and Solomon we read glowing reports of the abundance of necessaries for physical well-being, of crops of all kinds, of fruits of orchards, of herds and flocks. But it was not the tribes who produced them, for we are told repeatedly of the servitude of others. This point has not always been duly emphasized, and it is strange that it should be overlooked because the economic condition of the people is an indication of their contentment or dejection. Labor conditions are, as it were, a barometer which warns a shrewd observer of warm airs or chilly weather. To account for the steady decline that followed the reign of Solomon and resulted in the fall of Samaria and the ultimate death of Israel as a nation, we must take note of the economic weakening of the people. Dr. Noth tells us:

> . . . It is understandable that the lustre of the monarchy in Solomon's State was regarded with admiration and possibly also with pride, but it is clear that the people groaned under the burdens which it imposed and, above all, its entirely secular and political set-up made an unfavourable impression on the Israelite tribes. . . .[4]

Undoubtedly the return to idolatry and mixed marriages also contributed to their undoing, but they were not sufficient reason in themselves. Dr. Noth remarks:

> . . . This living together with the Canaanites was bound to affect the Israelites' way of life. . . .
>
> The closer association of Israelites and Canaanites could easily have had serious consequences in the religious sphere. . . . Later on, the prophets refer to such peculiarly Canaanite fertility rites as so-called religious prostitution, or the sacrifice of children as having established themselves here and there in the worship of Yahweh, and the worship of Yahweh having become assimilated to the Canaanite worship of Baal . . . and the consequent blurring of the differences between the Israelite and Canaanite way of life. . . .[5]

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[4] *The History of Israel*, p. 215.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 216-17.

No matter how we look at this period, we must keep in mind the purpose of the original invasion of this land. The intention was to raise a contented peasantry, a kingdom of priests. There is not a trace, not a suggestion, in the promise of Moses that Israel should become a political kingdom. Probably Moses had seen quite enough of the dark side of statecraft as a young man, and his training in the royal household would, in itself, be an education in plot, intrigue and sedition.

Only eighty years covered the reigns of David and Solomon, or about two generations, and we may attribute much of the constructive work done during the period to alien labor, craftsmen as well as serfs. Is it conceivable that the men of Judea suddenly became engineers, architects, and builders? Such a conversion from tent dwellers to skillful craftsmen would not be likely to take place. There were no schools for technical instruction, and the erection of altars on the high places would not serve to make men efficient as constructors of such places as Solomon's palace and the Temple.

Before the reign of David there is no record that the people of Judea were skilled as carpenters and masons. The strongholds and primitive cities were there before the time of Joshua. And it is doubtful, when one considers the division of the spoil before the settlement, that the newcomers were competent as artisans in keeping the cities and strongholds in repair. It is unthinkable that the Levites would do this work.

Hence, in pondering the fitness of the people of Israel for the enormous tasks which confronted them after the passing of Solomon, we must conclude that they could not be counted upon in a grave crisis. Their one merit seems to have been that of military prowess under skilled leaders. Wars and more wars wore them down at last, and they were easy prey for the disciplined armies of Assyria and Babylonia.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE DECLINE OF ISRAEL

There was constant war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam for the next seventeen years. The Egyptian Pharaoh Shishak traversed the whole of Palestine marauding and plundering. In the north, Jeroboam promptly gave the tribute demanded by the Pharaoh, but in Jerusalem it had to be exacted by force; hence the plundering of the Temple and the carrying off of all the treasures.

After the death of Jeroboam and Rehoboam the two kingdoms continued in revolution and anarchy. In the ninth century there was a temporary reconciliation between Israel and Judah, brought about by Ahab, son of Omri. But this respite was quickly followed by bloodshed and tragedy in Samaria and Jerusalem, under Jehu (probably 842 B.C.).[1] The details of the following reigns are not too clear, but the pattern is a familiar one: external troubles accompanied by crop failure, famine and drought. About the middle of the eighth century we have particulars of the payment of tribute by the King of Israel Menahem to Tiglath-pileser. This was in the nature of purchasing the friendship of the King of Assyria at the cost of a thousand talents of silver "that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom of his possession" (II Kings 15:19). Dr. T. K. Cheyne, in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, tells us:

> . . . It would seem that in Menahem's time the landed proprietors shared the burdens of the state as well as military service among themselves. If we reckon the talent at 3000 shekels, the assessment spoken of in the Hebrew text permits the inference that there were then in the Northern Kingdom 60,000 families possessed of heritable lands.[2]

The tribute was raised by a poll tax, we are told, and "Menahem demanded of every man of means in Israel fifty shekels of silver."[3]

The system of taxation that had been introduced into the country by Solomon for the purpose of keeping the court supplied with luxuries, particularly large quantities of cattle, had now become a firmly entrenched policy of the Crown. His division of the country into districts and his "organisation of the system of tribute were maintained after his death in the State of Israel,"[4] and ultimately the people were crushed beneath the burden.

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[1] Cornill, Carl H., *History of the People of Israel*, Chicago, Ill., Open Court Publishing Co., 1898 (trans. by W. H. Carruth), p. 117.

[2] "Menahem," *loc. cit.*, III, 3020.

[3] Cornill, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

[4] Noth, *Hist. of Israel*, p. 212.

The disasters that fell upon Israel and Judah, when the Assyrians and later the Babylonians defeated the kingdoms is dealt with so fully not only in the Old Testament, but in the books of eminent scholars that we need not dwell for long upon the captivity of the Judeans in Babylon. It is more important for us to find the reason for the calamities that visited them. The vivid descriptions in Lamentations and Jeremiah not only convince us that they have a historical value, but also that the writers were gifted with literary powers second to none in any literature.

One thing, however, should be noticed about the captivity in Babylon, and that is the opportunities given to the Jews to make careers for themselves in finance and commerce. In this respect, the exiles found themselves better off than those who were allowed to remain behind. The process had begun under David and Solomon when they became interested in industry and commerce in the urban marts of Gaza and Tyre and in Syria. From the time of their exile, however, by slow, tenacious development, they revealed a genius that eventually made them famous in all parts of the world.

Yet, it should not be overlooked that the original purpose for which they were to inherit the Promised Land had by this time become a thing of the past. The defeat of the intention by wars, by tribal quarrels, by economic vicissitude, revealed that, from the first, they were unfitted for an industrial life, whether it was farming or city activities of trade; and that the change from the nomadic life to servitude in Egypt, and the long years of intertribal unrest and wars with the Arameans and other enemies, after the settlement, made them easy prey for the Assyrian conquerors.

It may be too much to expect the modern student to appreciate the astonishing change in life and custom that had taken place when the tribes settled in Canaan. The story of Israel's transition from an agricultural people to the civilization of their adopted land was a profound challenge to their religion as well as other institutions. The contrast between the sands of the desert and pastures near the watercourses, in glens and dales, and on the steeps of hills where browsing animals can find food, and the cities such as Jericho, meant adapting themselves to conditions which they were quite unfitted to meet.

The instinct for the open, free, nomadic life of shepherds must have disappeared long before Moses came to the rescue of the captives. After four hundred years of serfdom, as laborers in Egypt, the memory of the happy days in Goshen would not be very vivid in the minds of Jacob's descendants.

The problems which arose from the many backslidings and diversions from the purpose of the invasion of Canaan affected every avenue of religious, social, political and economic life for the Israelites. Earlier civilizations had fallen into decay, but the demoralization of the tribes of Israel before the dispersion and the increase of tribulations, which followed their exile in

Assyria and Babylonia, brought into Judea and the neighborhood conditions similar to those that caused the collapse of Rome later.

However, the Israelites, through an unexpected turn in Fortune's wheel, were given a new lease of life when the Persians came to their assistance, and Cyrus permitted them to return to their homeland. No other people who had been overthrown were given such an opportunity for revival as the Israelites. In the days of Saul, David and Solomon, when disaster followed disaster, their repentance had softened the heart of Yahweh, and they were given another chance to obey the Law. But that period under mighty kings had lasted only a comparatively short time—about one hundred and twenty years.

The economic conditions in Israel, which contributed to the decline and fall of Samaria in 722 B.C., brought the kingdom of Israel to an end, and enabled Assyria to complete her conquest, are described by Dr. T. H. Robinson:

> . . . There had grown up in Samaria and elsewhere a class of wealthy persons who were engaged in commerce or in money-lending. Amongst them luxury had taken the place of comfort, and the best products of the known world were at their command. Isaiah speaks of the substitution of marble as a building material for stone, and of the planting of better-class trees instead of the inferior species which had been destroyed in war. Amos describes the extravagance of the furniture and the wasteful ostentation of the rich man's table. A change indeed from the days when Ahab himself went up and down the country trying to find fodder for his horses!
>
> As so often, the increase of prosperity in one class was accompanied by a growing distress in others. The inequality in the distribution of wealth increased and the lower classes grew more and more wretched and miserable. . . .[5]

This author also tells us about the effect of mortgage upon the people. It was always a sign of decay, and indeed, became a symbol of serfdom. The Assyrians took into exile 27,280 persons of the upper classes and "flooded the land with foreign colonists, thus entirely destroying its nationality."[6] Large-scale ownership of the fertile areas during the exile is the first statement we have of the system of landlordism at its worst. And the conditions in Samaria, as they are pictured by some authors, savor of abject serfdom.

The conditions reported by Amos and Isaiah in both kingdoms in the eighth century were lamentable. These prophets condemned the people for the luxury and licentiousness prevalent among the rich classes; while the poor, downtrodden were reduced to poverty. It is necessary to study the books of these two prophets, in particular, if we are to understand the economic, social and religious background of affairs in the north and south before the Israelites were carried off by the Assyrians and Babylonians.

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[5] *The Decline and Fall of the Hebrew Kingdom*, The Clarendon Bible, Old Testament, Vol. III, Oxford, 1926 (reprinted 1930), p. 33.

[6] Cornill, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-6.

In the sixth chapter of Isaiah we read:

> . . . Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips (vs. 5).

And in chapter 5 Isaiah says:

> Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth (vs. 8)!
>
> Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel (vs. 24).

Isaiah and Amos were witnesses of the degeneration that had fallen upon the tribes, and they foretold the disaster that would visit them.

After the conquest, four Assyrian provinces arose in the territory of Israel. There were various uprisings from time to time, and Egypt became the phalanx of the resistance against Assyria in Syria and Palestine. Meanwhile, Judah continued as a vassal State paying tribute to the Assyrian Emperor. This was the period when the prophet Isaiah was warning often against putting trust in Egypt.

In the religious life of Jerusalem, the Assyrian gods were worshiped side by side with Yahweh. It was King Hezekiah in 705 B.C. who abolished the brazen serpent of the Assyrian religion and reestablished the old worship of the Jews. The influence of Isaiah on the king has been argued pro and con and is still open to question. However, in 701 B.C. when Sennacherib moved against Judah, Hezekiah sought exemption from pillage of the city by the payment of tribute:

> And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.
>
> And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the King's house.
>
> At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria (II Kings 18:14-16).

During the seventh century the power of the Assyrian empire began to wane and finally met defeat at the hands of the Babylonians. The royal capital of Nineveh fell in 612 B.C., and after a siege of several years, the Assyrian nation was obliterated in 606 B.C. The Egyptians had a short period of glory after this time, during which the kingdom of Judah became a vassal State and subject to heavy tax. In 587 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian crown prince, placed his own vassal in Jerusalem. In the interim period, 598-587 B.C., when Judah was a vassal State under its own king, Jeremiah warned the Judeans not to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar, but the people distrusted the prophet and regarded him as a traitor. We are told, however, that the king listened to him and summoned him secretly.

The siege of the city of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans began in January of 587 B.C., and by July 586 B.C., after the most dreadful famine, the city fell into the hands of the Chaldeans, and those who had escaped death were led into exile in Babylon. The remarkable thing is that Israel, as a race, survived this great catastrophe.

The Babylonian exile lasted from 586 to 537 B.C. The story of the plight of the exiles from Judah, in that half century when disaster fell upon them, is told in Lamentations. This short book was written in Babylon, and some of the scholars have decided that part of it was written by an eye witness. It unfolds a tale of horror, and there are several passages in it that reveal in a strong light the woeful condition into which the people of Judea and the northern kingdom had fallen:

> Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude: she dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest: all her persecutors overtook her between the straits (Lam. 1:3).
>
> The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst: the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them.
>
> Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire:
>
> Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick (4:4, 7-8).
>
> Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens.
>
> We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows.
>
> Our necks are under persecution: we labour, and have no rest.
>
> We have given the hand to the Egyptians and to the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread (5:2, 3, 5, 6).

The injunction of Moses concerning the land had become a dead letter: "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark." We cannot accept the notion sometimes put forward that trespass was wholly to be attributed to aliens. Indeed, we read little or nothing about it after the portions of the country were allotted to the twelve tribes. However, there is one incident touching this before the death of Joshua, when the sons of Joseph claimed more territory than had been apportioned to them.

As a factor to be considered in the downfall of the Northern Kingdom, the mixed marriages that had taken place in the territories of Zebulon and

Naphtali were affairs which perhaps changed the conditions of landholding by the Israelites, particularly in the case of an alien woman who had lost her husband. What would she know of the command about the landmark? She worshiped quite another god; no matter how devoted her husband might have been to Yahweh. As for a woman of Israel marrying an alien man, we may be sure he would have his own ideas about the ownership of the soil.

The cry of Jeremiah for justice and repentance at the end of the seventh century is in the same strain. He declares:

> Thus saith the Lord; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place (Jer. 22:3).
>
> Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work (Jer. 22:13).

It is not easy to understand why so many writers fail to give the same importance to the economic problem as the prophets did. The latter considered it of a significance so great that in some cases they attributed the disasters that fell upon Judah and Israel to the conditions of land tenure and the use of serfs. We learn about heavy taxation, mortgages, the displacement of labor of youths of the tribes, due to recruiting the best of the young men. Jeremiah says:

> Build ye houses, and dwell in them: and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them . . . that ye may be increased there and not diminished.
>
> And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives . . . (Jer. 29:5-7).

The prophet of Babylon presents us with a woeful picture of the ravished kingdoms. It is one of desolation. The following description given by Dr. Guthe is a vivid one:

> . . . According to Jer. 52:28-30, 4600 men in all were carried into exile out of Jerusalem and Judah; this will represent a total of some 14,000-18,000 souls—certainly but a modest fraction of the entire population, although doubtless representing its best and most vigorous elements. If we take into account also those who had migrated into Egypt, we may safely assume that among those who remained behind were included but few persons who had had experience in the conduct of public affairs. The necessary consequence was that the residents felt themselves reduced to a state of apathy and helplessness. . . .[7]

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[7] *Ency. Biblica,* "Israel," II, 2249.

CHAPTER XXV

ISAIAH

When we reach the Book of Isaiah, we come to a turning point in the history of Israel, which is not only a surprise, but of a revolutionary nature in theology, ritual and economic condition. Justice here appears in unspotted robes; the cult of Yahweh is to be abandoned; and Jehovah becomes the God of all peoples.

The Bible-class reader of the last quarter of the nineteenth century knew as little about this book as he did that of Job. Although the last verses of the sixty-fifth chapter were frequently quoted in Nonconformist sermons, and some pastors reminded their flocks that Oliver Cromwell had read the fifty-eighth chapter to the members of the House of Commons, only one other matter of great consequence to the religionists of that day was the Servant references (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13–53:12). The importance this book now assumes is vital to an understanding of the reasons why Israel and Judah fell beneath the sword and their peoples were taken into captivity.

I have read many works during the past forty years on Isaiah, scholarly commentaries, and I find in them new lights thrown upon the mission of the prophet. Three books the student should read for a thorough knowledge of the conditions that prevailed in the whole of Palestine about the year 700 B.C. are: Sidney Smith's Schweich Lectures of 1940, *Isaiah Chapters XL-LV*[1], Robert Pfeiffer's penetrating review in his *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Pt. IV, Chap. I); also the Reverend Robert H. Kennett's Schweich Lectures of 1909: *The Composition of the Book of Isaiah in the Light of History and Archaeology.*[2]

The new God in the religious history of Israel, we have learned, does not obliterate the memory of the former one. The reversion of the tribes to the idolatry of other peoples they have known is set before us in chapter after chapter, from the time of Moses to the adoption of Baal by Judea and the golden calf by the kingdom of Israel. It should not surprise us to find that, when the captives returned to the Promised Land, many of them brought with them a knowledge of the gods and rituals of the kingdoms of the Euphrates.

Israel had changed its gods so often since the exodus that it seems the time had come to put an end to idol worship in all its forms. Still, we should not place too much confidence in a ready acceptance of the hopes of Isaiah.

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[1] London, published for the British Academy, Oxford University Press, 1944.

[2] London, published for the British Academy, Oxford University Press, 1910.

No doubt, the tribes would find it hard to forsake the old alien gods and their effigies, which they had made with their hands. Perhaps they would compare one ritual with another, extolling the virtues and overlooking the faults of the idols they had worshiped in peace and war, in times of abundance and in periods of impoverishment. Indeed, we learn in Isaiah there was wide diversity of opinion about the choice of idols among the tribes. Understanding this condition is necessary, if we are to appreciate the complete change in worship to be announced by the prophet.

The scathing denunciation of Israel to be found in the first chapter of Isaiah is more severe than any given in the days of Yahweh. The backslidings of the tribes are exposed in vivid terms: a "sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters" (1:4). He reminds them of the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:9).

A drastic reform was needed. The old ideals of ritual and sacrifice, the worship of their god of war, were to be stamped out root and branch:

> To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats (1:11).

These offerings have no savor for his nostrils. The indictment is general. No one is spared. In it we infer that high priest, Levite, kings, and people are guilty and threatened with destruction.

The announcement of what the change will mean astonishes us because it is complete and quite alien to the experience of long generations of Israelites:

> And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (2:4).

Isaiah was born in Jerusalem about 770 B.C., and in that city passed nearly all of his days. He was closely associated with four kings, and this accounts for the wide scope of his investigations. No one who reads his fulminations can doubt his having a searching eye, and that his ears were wide open to the whispered secrets of the court, as they were to the scandal of the street. I can fancy him sitting near the water gate listening to the gossip of the people. Little escaped his eyes and ears. Think of the catalogue or inventory of adornments he held up to scorn:

> In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon,
> The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,

> The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings,
> The rings, and nose jewels,
> The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins,
> The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails (3:18-23).

He missed nothing in the wardrobe of the bedizened ladies of the court. Still, the failings of the garish women of Jerusalem, so far as adornment is concerned, do seem to have something in common with those of the women among the captives, whom Moses denounced severely. Perhaps Isaiah made a closer study of the weaker sex than Moses did. The following is to the point:

> And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty (3:24).

Perspicacity in a prophet is not usual. As a rule, they are concerned with iniquity in a general sense, or dealing with eternal things, and often overlook the trivia of the daily round. Not so with Isaiah. Little escaped his notice: "Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made" (2:8).

The rapidity with which he turns from one subject to another amazes me. To go from handworked idols, in a few verses, to the economic condition of the people reveals a range of ideas that one might call panoramic in scope. He says:

> The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.
> What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor (3:14-15)?

It is a surprise to find a reference to the northern part of the kingdom of Israel, for there is no reason why we should think Isaiah was an itinerant prophet. He did not wander far afield. How he learned what was taking place north of Samaria is not told. Still, this is of interest to us because references to Galilee and what was happening there are so rare. He says:

> Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations (9:1).

So that there may not be any mistake made concerning the prophecy of 9:6, it is well to point out that the future ruler of a just system was to occupy the throne of David. This is stated clearly. It is to be a political reform, one of statecraft; the ideal which Joseph Klausner, in his *Jesus of Nazareth*, insists upon with special emphasis.

The fervor of the proclamation of the God of all people is like a triumphant cry voiced by a seer who has had a vision of the glory of the kingdom to come:

> And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: Though thou wast angry with me thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.
>
> Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.
>
> Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.
>
> And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.
>
> Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.
>
> Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee (12:1-6).

This cry will echo down the ages, and when we reach Nazareth, the petition will be put in a few simple words: "Thy kingdom come on earth." How different is this from the desire to see the throne of David occupied by another politician. "This is known in all the earth," and the announcement is not for a tribe, for a cult, for a ritual. It embraces all the people of earth. True, it is marked especially for the people of Israel, but what is salvation for them is salvation for all the nations. This change in thought has not been thoroughly appreciated by some of the scholars, who seem to have missed the vast difference between two conceptions of the prophet: (1) the hope of a politician for the throne of David; and (2) that of Jehovah, God with a capital "G."

In 37:16 we read: "Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth."

The Book of Isaiah, which the expert scholars tell us is to be found from chapters 1 to 39, contains not only vital religious changes of thought, but it introduces us to wholly new conceptions of the Godhead. We marvel at the fundamental revolution of ideas that took place in Isaiah's mind. Indeed, it seems as if he had a vision of the man who believed that the kingdom on earth might be as it is in heaven.

The scholars are now in agreement about the division of the Books of Isaiah, and have decided that chapters 40-55 constitute Deutero-Isaiah. Perhaps these books have called forth more study than any others in the Bible. The literature upon the Servant problem is extensive in the volumes of renowned authors, and also in encyclopaedias, where some of the articles run to great length. Scarcely any of the experts of Bible exegesis refer to these passages as a prophetic announcement of Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, so many suggestions have been made as to who or what is the "Servant," as an individual or as a people, that the reader of books upon this subject may conclude that there is nothing but confusion concerning his or its identity. The theories range from Jeremiah to a teacher of the Torah, and from Ezekiel to Cyrus.

It seems to me the most reasonable suggestions that have been made are: (1) the Servant is an individual; or (2) the Servant is Israel. Why an individual should not typify a nation is not clear. We have examples of that in the history of nearly all peoples. The great man is his country in the popular notion. Whatever decision may be made in the future about the Servant passage, we may be sure that the great scholars will not depart from the notion that Isaiah had in mind some person who would appear in the near future. He might come as a practical prophet, or as the chosen leader of a people. It is most unlikely that the Servant passages refer to the coming of someone more than five hundred years after they were spoken or written.

The conditions prevailing in Judah and the north country were not favorable to people who hoped for a long-range realization of a better state of affairs. When the fortunes of most of the people are at low ebb, they look for immediate relief. Therefore, the coming of a Servant who would execute justice and bring harmony among the tribes must have meant an appearance in the near future. I gather not only from the Servant chapters, but from the commentaries and interpretations of the great scholars that the Servant was Israel, and that the people were looking for an individual speaking in her name.

Such an idea is not out of keeping with the experience of civilizations that had gone before and many that have since disappeared. Kings, statesmen, dictators, political and economic reformers have sprung up in the history of the peoples and called them to unite, re-establish old laws, throw off oppression, and help to bring about a fairer day.

As we proceed with our reading of the chapters of the two Isaiahs, we begin to recognize the totally different spheres of thought and action that stamp them. Israel is to be constituted upon a basis of justice, and her people are to enjoy the work of their hands. There is little left of the old ritual, and politics are considered subservient. A new rule is to be established. God, the Creator of heaven and earth and all things that therein are, is to be worshiped as a loving Father who has provided all the essentials of life for His children. Not one people only, but people everywhere are to receive the benefits of Providence.

It is both a religious and ethical reformation, to be brought about by the conversion of individuals, not tribe by tribe, or by one section or one nation. It is to be extended to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Perhaps we may appreciate the depth and scope of these reforms by contrasting them with the impression we have gained of the old tribal god. Yahweh was a god of war, a blatant nationalist, intolerant, cruel, merciless. In the conquests of Joshua, he was not satisfied with the slaughter of his enemies, but ordered their wives and children to be put to death. One glaring example of his ruthless policy was the treatment of the family of Achan (Joshua 7:25).

Under the will and rule of Jehovah, there is to be no more war; justice is to be executed for the benefit of all. The note that is sounded throughout the chapters, with regard to the consequences of this reform, is one of joy. It is really a picture of heaven on earth.

For those who have a modicum of poetic ardor, many of these chapters will start the spirit throbbing with exaltation. In literature they reach a level so high that none of the greatest poets has surpassed them. The imagery given to the vision of the future is of a transcendent character. One is lifted up by their purity. In many of the verses there is a touch of benevolence swelling up from the depths of sympathy. The human strain redeems them from mere rhapsody. He is a panegyrist who also embodies the wisdom of the seer.

> Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding (40:28).

Restoration through justice is the purpose of the change:

> But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore (42:22).

The cry is for justice; the cry for divine justice rings in passage after passage:

> Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain [upon] the just: let the earth be opened, and bud forth a saviour: and let justice spring up together: I the Lord have created him (Douay 45:8).[3]

The appeal is presented often in a homely phrase, which brings to our mind how sure is his touch in making a simile go home. He says:

> Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee (49:15).

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[3] Dr. Sidney Smith prefers the translation of Professor S. H. Hooke:

> Let righteousness come down, O heavens, from on high; and let the sky send it down like rain: let the earth open to give the fruit of salvation, causing righteousness to come up with it. I the Lord have made it come about.

The promise of justice is repeated over and over again, in various ways:

> Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people (51:4).
>
> How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth (52:7)!

A new Jerusalem is to be built with ideals of everlasting glory. There is no mention of a great palace, a temple, or walls of a stronghold. The conception is totally different from that which impressed us when we read of David and Solomon.

> Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem (52:9).

To bring about this new religious and economic utopia, tasks were imposed upon the people. There was work to be done. They could not enter into this new heaven on earth as if its gates were wide open and ready to receive the people. In chapter 58 we read:

> And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.
>
> And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in (58:11-12).

When Cromwell referred to this chapter, he added:

> . . . And if there be any higher work which mortals can attain unto in the world, beyond this, I acknowledge my ignorance of it.

The past is to be blotted out, memory of it forgotten. Jerusalem is to be a holy city because there the people live under the divine will and law:

> . . . For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.
>
> But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.
>
> And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.
>
> There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.
>
> And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

> They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
>
> They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them (65:18-23).

This extraordinary vision of the New Jerusalem is undoubtedly the source from which inspiration was drawn for the utopias of St. Augustine and Campanella. Traces of it are found in Bruno, and there are many references to it in the works of medieval writers.

Dr. Sidney Smith tells me that "the critical school, from Wellhausen onwards, always based their studies of the prophets on the distinction between the New Jerusalem of the returned exiles, and the apocalyptic hope of a future Messiah; there are long dissertations on this in endless German books. Since about 1920 a new view has come to popularity among critics who have a theological interest, and claim that the Messianic hope can be clearly observed in the 'Servant songs' of chapters 40-55, but then they have to deduce that those 'songs' are not an authentic part of 'Second Isaiah' but come as incomplete fragments from a different cycle of prophecies."

To me it is conclusive evidence that Isaiah saw the perfect unity of economic justice and holiness. The one cannot be achieved without the other. They are inseparable. The people are to be despoiled no more; they are to plant and to eat; they will build and inhabit. Those who produce will enjoy the work of their hands. The people shall not labor in vain; they are the elect of God, and all the things they need will be added unto them. This is the gospel, the good tidings that long years afterwards were given to the people in the villages of Galilee.

CHAPTER XXVI

AMOS AND THE MINOR PROPHETS

At this point I think it is necessary to state as clearly as possible the objective I am trying to reach. First, let me say that Scripture, as given to us in the Pentateuch and in the Books of the Old Testament down to Malachi, was never intended by the Jews to be controversial statements of ritual, moral codes, or political periods, for the conjectures of the higher critics. The student who reads the Bible as it is set forth for us, may never have seen a single work produced by the Bible scholars. The latter, on their part, seem to live in a sphere of criticism of their own making.

It seems to me that the trouble arises out of the misunderstanding of divine decree. Surely we may say that the god who instructed Moses was not the God that Amos conceived. Yahweh is in no way God. He is the god of the children of Abraham. Therefore, in these controversies, we should take into consideration the extraordinary contradiction, which comes to the mind of the intelligent Bible student. He undoubtedly asks himself, "How can Yahweh be the God of Amos?" So far, I have not found a clear statement upon this that would satisfy the inquiring mind of the man of today who desires to know what the Bible means to him from beginning to end.

May we suggest that this same difficulty that seems to harass the Bible reader today was by no means clear to the Israelites. Hence, their reversion to idol worship which, over and over again, brought forth severe and adverse criticism from the prophets. If the Jews of the period before Samuel were in doubt, why should we wonder that the Bible reader of today asks searching questions of what he is to believe?

When Amos announced his conception of the Deity, a revolution in religious thought took place. His contemporaries, Hosea and Isaiah, abandoned the old notion of the tribal god Yahweh and recognized the Creator as the Father of all men. This was an epoch-making change. Still, the compilers and the editors of the folklore history, since the days when Moses fled from Egypt to Midian, down to the advent of Amos, gave to Yahweh the designation of God with a capital "G," and this has been the cause of a great confusion of ideas.

There is, however, a simple way for the Bible student to grasp the full extent of this controversy. If he will turn to the article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on "Hebrew Religion," written by Dr. S. A. Cook,[1] he will find a thorough examination of these problems. The compilers who put the books together, must have known of the adoption of the Creator of the universe and all that therein is, as announced by Amos; yet, they conferred on Yahweh the title of "divine." Hence, the confused notions that have arisen in the minds of Bible students when they read the early Books of the Old Testament.

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[1] *Loc. cit.*, 14th ed., XI, 365 esp.

Three hundred years before Nehemiah became governor of Jerusalem, a shepherd from Tekoa arose to preach a new gospel, new to many generations of Israelites, but in their history as old as the Mosaic tablets. It had been forgotten so long that many who heard it regarded it as heresy. And well might those who throve upon injustice denounce it as seditious and irreligious. The area through which this shepherd carried his message and delivered it to the people extended from Bethel west almost to the coast, and perhaps as far north as some of the principal places in Samaria. Although a Judean, Amos preached his message in Israel.

How far he traveled into the Northern Kingdom is not made clear, but he fell afoul of Jeroboam II, who was alarmed not only at his prophetic warnings of disaster, but deeply disturbed at his denunciation of the wrongdoings of the rich. The high priest of Bethel, Amaziah, appealed to the king to order the return of Amos to Judea.

It would be interesting to know how far over the northern Samarian line Amos traveled in his crusade. According to the latest maps, the Northern Kingdom at his time had suffered severely, and the portions allotted to Zebulon, Issachar and Naphtali had been absorbed in the Aramean wars, in which Israel met defeat. One map showing Judah and what was the Northern Kingdom leaves the two strips at the coast, Philistia and Phoenicia, as they were at the time of Solomon, Judea having no outlet to the sea. It is not likely that Amos would venture into the lost territories, for his sole object was to rouse the people of Israel to prepare for impending disaster.

It is in this Book of Amos, the shepherd, that we find a change of thought. The local god of the Israelites speaks no more. Yahweh is abandoned. The conception of Amos is very different from that of the prophets who went before him. His God is the Creator of the universe, the Father of all people. The difference in idea is so vast that it may seem strange to the student that Amos was permitted to deliver the new message to Israelites, who had not forgotten the tribal god from whom Moses received the laws which the people promised to obey. There are several passages, referring to this new conception, which should be studied. Let us look at 9:7:

> Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have not I brought up Israel out of the Land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?

In this, no preference is shown for a particular people. Amos propounds the idea of a universal Creator, as described in 5:8 and 14:

> Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name:
>
> Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken.

It is necessary to grasp this fundamental change regarding the idea of the Creator, so that we may readily understand the economic gospel preached by Amos. That, too, differs vastly from the promise of a land of milk and honey for one particular people, to be achieved through the arbitrament of war.

The King James version of the Old Testament, published in 1611 came a few years after the Douay Bible. It is in the Book of Amos we find what a difference it makes to the sense to read "justice" for the term "righteousness." There cannot be two different definitions of the former term. For Amos, justice was a divine law. In the Book of Amos the difference between the two terms is clearly shown. He does not mince matters by making excuses for the "righteous" man who supports iniquitous laws.

When we read the chapters of Amos, we cannot shut our minds to the probability that he was conscious that in Judea and Samaria there were Sabbatarians. But the criticism in my time was mild, timorous, compared to his. We read in the Douay version, chapter 5:

> You that turn judgment into wormwood, and forsake justice in the land. . . .
>
> Because I know your manifold crimes, and your grievous sins: enemies of the just, taking bribes, and oppressing the poor in the gate. . . .
>
> I hate, and have rejected your festivities: and I will not receive the odour of your assemblies.
>
> And if you offer me holocausts, and your gifts, I will not receive them: neither will I regard the vows of your fat beasts.
>
> Take away from me the tumult of thy songs: and I will not hear the canticles of thy harp.
>
> But judgment shall be revealed as water, and justice as a mighty torrent (vss. 7, 12, 21-24).

The student should remember the purpose of this mission of Amos, the teacher of justice, for there will be several occasions to refer to it before we reach the end, at Calvary, of a still greater mission. Neither king nor high priest would tolerate a champion of the poor who believed that divine justice was that which binds man to an invisible Creator, and so he was ordered to return to Judea. As Dr. H. H. Rowley says: "To Amos justice was of the very essence of God's Being, and therefore it must mark all who worship Him. Man's rights were his because God willed them for him, and God willed them for him because of what He was in Himself."[2]

The original purpose for which the Israelites entered the Promised Land was lost. The pledge "Thou shalt eat bread without scarceness" (Deut. 8:9) was not redeemed, even when drought and pestilence fell upon them. They were going the way peoples of the Euphrates and the Tigris and those of the nations to the north and east of Damascus had gone before them. They had perished by the sword. It always cuts both ways. It slays the foe and un-mans the victor. He becomes war weary and breeds children who lack stamina.

It is not difficult to imagine how far the Israelites had departed from the Mosaic idea. The denunciations of Amos inveigh against the luxuries of the rich and describe how the poor were milched by rent and taxes to keep the landlords in splendor. There are many passages that refer to these extraordinary conditions, but the one at the beginning of chapter 6 should be quoted, for it mentions in detail the extravagances of life without labor. Amos says:

> Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came! . . .
>
> Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;
>
> That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;
>
> That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David;
>
> That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph (6:1-6).

These conditions of plunder and idleness made the fertile lands of Palestine an inviting prey to the Assyrians and the Babylonians, who desired to add them to their domains. When the rich have "plenty in abundance," the producers suffer all the pains of penury. Amos was not only a righteous critic; he was also a far-seeing prophet. But his warnings came too late to save Israel from destruction.

The oracles of Hosea serve us very little information akin to the purpose we have set upon. His work was done in the Northern Kingdom, but we do not know the places where he delivered his orations. Still, his strictures upon the conditions that prevailed in his day indicate that Israel had fallen into a state of depravity. There is, however, a new note struck in his conception of man's relationship to God. He rejects the idea of "fear" of Jehovah and says it should be "knowledge of Him." Loyalty to the All-Father is the test he imposes upon the people, and perhaps he more than any of the other prophets realizes that conversion is solely a problem for the individual and not for men in the aggregate. Man must save himself by realizing that the kingdom of God is within him. The same idea we shall find later in the Gospels.

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[2] *The Growth of the OT*, p. 112.

The other minor prophets, as they are called, are useful to the student who is bent upon ascertaining the political and economic conditions of the two kingdoms when they became a prey to Alexander (332-23 B.C.) and later to the Ptolemies of Egypt (323-198 B.C.).

I remember only one instance of a protest being made against what may be called the latter-day prophets for their outright denunciations of the religious, economic, and political conditions of their time. That was in the case of Amos, when the high priest Amaziah petitioned the king to have him sent back to Judea. Why they were permitted to criticize so severely the people in authority seems strange to us. For no one would suggest that either Judea or the kingdom of Israel was a peace-loving democracy when the prophets after Isaiah and Amos indulged in freedom of speech of an order that has no parallel in history.

It might be said there was no censor in Israel in that day. But have their denunciations no significance for us? Are we so dull witted that we cannot understand how sorely we need a Micah or a Haggai to make us realize that our apathy to, or ignorance of, the causes of the misery of the world are, in principle, no different from those that destroyed Israel?

Micah was a younger contemporary of Isaiah and lived during the eighth century B.C. He is described by Pfeiffer as "a humble villager." He turned his critical wrath upon Samaria and declared:

> Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds. . . .
> And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage (Micah 2:1-2).

The Book of Micah is devoted to what may be called a report upon the condition of the poor. There is scarcely an avenue of life or a channel of activity that is not explored. Micah calls a spade a spade. How it was possible for this simple villager to penetrate so deeply into the tribulations of the people and the cause of them raises in us an admiration for his perspicacity. He must have moved about a good deal while he was surveying the various scenes, and we should like to know how he made a living for himself.

In many of the diatribes uttered by the prophet, the economic promise of Moses—"Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark"—is kept in mind by him. There is no verse in which it is mentioned precisely as it was given, but in chapter after chapter after the days of Solomon, the plight of the people indicates that the landmark has been removed. Such sentences as "adding field to field," and "he has changed the portion of my people" convince us that the prophets undoubtedly knew the anathema expressed in Deuteronomy: "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark" (27:17). This same idea is laid down in the codes of many civilizations. Sometimes it is referred to as the boundary stone, or the hedge.

Haggai was an advocate of the restoration of the Temple, which had lain in ruins for sixty-six years. He was a ritualist, and urged the people to return to their faith. Yet, he did not overlook the adverse condition which afflicted the people, depressing them to such an extent that they neglected their religious duties. Speaking about the harvest failures and the famine, which, he said, was a punishment from God, he told them:

> Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes (1:6).

The same cry was uttered by a fellow-prophet Zechariah, who called for justice, true judgment:

> . . . Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother (7:9).
> . . . Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates (8:16).

The last of the prophets was Malachi, and his book ends the Old Testament. The change that was made by Isaiah and Amos from the worship of a tribal god to the Creator of all people is sounded anew by Malachi. He says:

> Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers (2:10)?
>
> Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments (4:4).

Robert Pfeiffer sums up the direful conditions, which prevailed, in his chapter on Malachi. He says:

> . . . The author is familiar with Deuteronomy, but knows nothing of the Priestly Code.
>
> Like the Book of Haggai, the Book of Malachi is of slight religious and literary importance, but invaluable as a historical source. Haggai had attributed the wretched condition of the community in Jerusalem in 520 to failure to rebuild the Temple. More than half a century later the situation remained desperate. Like Haggai, Malachi paints a sordid picture of the economic and spiritual misery of the Jewish community, and believes that the cure lies in correcting ritual shortcomings and in hoping for Jehovah's intervention in their behalf. . . .[3]

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[3] *Books of the Old Testament*, p. 323.

A wide gap yawns between the end of the work of the minor prophets and the beginning of the Gospels. Something like three or four hundred years are without record in the Bible we read. Many students have wondered why this should be and what the silence means. The truth of the matter is that the whole of the Promised Land had to bear the brunt of two more disastrous invasions: that of Alexander the Great and that of Imperial Rome.

The history of Israel, as it is set forth in the Old Testament and supplemented by the penetrating analyses of the most eminent critics is one of long and sure decay. The cause was undoubtedly the perversity of the people. We learn this from the story following the settlement in Canaan until the time Israel chose its first king. Afterwards, the political system added burdens, owing to the wars of Saul and David, and no matter how glorious the victories were, they did not in any way compensate for the disruption of life as it was to be in the Promised Land.

There is no story of a people that contains such severe denunciations of the waywardness of the folk as this. It is not only in the major prophets that we find the severest censure poured upon the people: kings, high priests, other Levites are denounced. Indeed, no one in authority in the royal realm or in the Temple at Jerusalem escapes the bitter exacerbations that are given in chapter after chapter.

In considering this history, we shall the better understand it if we dissociate the high moral code of the commandments from the horrors of slaughter narrated in Joshua, and which were engaged in by the children of Israel before they were to live in the land of Canaan. For some of the Bible students of the nineteenth century were prone to level their criticism so markedly at the methods by which the children came to inhabit the land of Canaan that the laws under which they were obliged to live received scant notice.

The wickedness of Manasseh, king of Judah, as we read of it in II Kings 21, is an instance of the terrible penalties that were to fall upon the people for their sins:

> . . . Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.
>
> And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.
>
> And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies;
>
> Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day (21:12-15).

To my mind it is essential in this historical inquiry for the student to cleave closely to the line of progressive deterioration of economic circumstance, if he is to understand the outpourings of the distracted souls of the minor prophets.

The conclusion of the matter should be plain to one who has followed this course of tracing the economic line of deterioration from Judges to Malachi. As it was after the time of Amos and Isaiah, when Palestine was an easy prey for the Assyrian and the Babylonian, so it was after the time of Nehemiah, a land worth invading and easily subjected by Alexander's forces.

After the fourth century B.C., there were internecine wars, and when Rome was ready to strike, Pompey found Israel demoralized. Under Roman governors there was no chance to revive, even if they were given the opportunity to repent and redeem.

CHAPTER XXVII

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

One of the first official acts of Cyrus, the new Persian king, was to give permission to the Jewish exiles to return to their home. The Book of Ezra tells the story of the Jews in this period, from 538 to 444 B.C. In 538, 50,000 exiles migrated back to Jerusalem; one-tenth settling in the city itself and the rest in the vicinity. There was a strict barrier between the returned exiles and the population that had remained in the country.

We now enter upon a long period in which there were attempts to bring about economic reform, and although the significance of these attempts has been treated slightly by many of the scholars, we must regard them as efforts of the prophets to restore the Mosaic system of land settlement. With them it was a sacred trust, for as they described the rot that had set in through the breaking of the old laws, they realized there could not be a land of milk and honey for Israelites unless the landmark was restored and the debt pillar removed. This was a religious reform.

Two scenes described in Nehemiah are particularly worthy of our consideration.[1] The first one tells us of Ezra reading the Law at the water gate and giving to it sense and understanding. The congregation was so deeply impressed that all the people wept. Whether this were the original Law or a supplementary one does not affect the incident itself, for the description of the scene and the response of the people are given with a touch of reality. It might have been reported by an eye witness.

We have known such scenes to take place when bona fide revivalists have read the Bible to gatherings of people who have experienced all the vicissitudes of life without virtue. The history of religious movements in England is full of such scenes. Wesley, Whitefield, Toplady, Roberts (in Wales), and many others experienced the same remarkable change in crowds.

This reading of the Law by Ezra, and the effect that it had upon the people, is not as strange as it may seem. Although it had been in abeyance for some three hundred years, it held the same force as when the people swore they would obey, in the days of Moses. Such is memory of biblical commands. Once firmly rooted in the mind, they pass on as if they were in the bloodstream of generations to come. This also is an experience that was well known in England; and in the United States we have seen similar effects at great meetings held by revivalists.

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[1] Prof. Rowley tells us: "The date of Ezra's promulgation of the law of P has commonly been held to be 444 B.C., but in modern times many scholars have believed . . . that it was in 397 B.C." (*Growth of the OT*, p. 35).

Here I should remind the reader that in 621 B.C., when the Temple was being repaired in Jerusalem, a book of the Law was found there. Using this book as a basis for religious reform, King Josiah made sweeping changes, destroying all objects connected with the Canaanite worship. On this occasion the Law Book was read before the king and its curses clearly set forth. Professor Rowley writes:

> . . . Josiah's reform seems to have gone beyond the limits of the southern kingdom. It should be remembered that his reform was the religious side of a bid for independence on the occasion of the approaching collapse of the Assyrian empire, and it would be natural to expect that the northern kingdom as well as Judah would welcome deliverance from the Assyrian yoke, and would accept Judah's leadership in such a cause. . . .[2]

The next scene described by Nehemiah tells of a revolution that has no parallel in the history of any nation. A cruel system was overthrown without bloodshed. It is a pity this reform has been overlooked by men who preach Sunday after Sunday upon the wickedness of the world and the need for repentance. For if they had studied it, they might have given their congregations before the First World War some hope that the churches were opposed to land monopoly and privilege. But there was no Nehemiah anywhere in the world with the courage to set men free.

The gathering of the people to voice their complaints before Nehemiah is described as follows:

> And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews.
>
> For there were that said, We, our sons and our daughters, are many: therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat, and live.
>
> Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth.
>
> There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards.
>
> Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards (5:1-5).

When Nehemiah heard of these woes, he became angry and turned upon the oppressors and accused them of cruelties in scathing terms, saying:

> . . . Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them.
>
> And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer.

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

> Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?
>
> I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury.
>
> Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them (5:7-11).

Then came the most extraordinary instance of complete reformation that can be found in the history of any civilization. The words of Nehemiah must have struck deep, for the landlords and usurers quailed before him:

> Then said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise.
>
> Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the Lord. And the people did according to this promise (5:12-13).

There is only one way in which this amazing restoration could have been brought about. Nehemiah had the genius to bring the oppressed and the oppressors together. Those who crushed the people heard the complaints and saw, perhaps for the first time, a great body of men, women and children who had suffered under them. Yet, we doubt not that Nehemiah was the man of the moment and eminently fitted for the task he undertook. Blessed with the courage of true conviction and the determination to have justice done according to the Law, he achieved his purpose. All this was done by one man whose rule lasted only twelve years. We wonder if Solon as well as other Greek rulers took a lesson from this in compelling oppressors to remove the debt pillar and restore the landmark.

These instances should not be passed over lightly, as if they were occasional outbursts against economic distress. They have a significance which does not appear at first reading, but on reflection, it comes to mind that they have a bearing on the history of the Promised Land for the next four hundred years.

Nehemiah was governor of Judea with his headquarters in Jerusalem. We need not enter upon the ground covered thoroughly by so many of the great scholars, such as the rebuilding of the wall and the reform of the priesthood. The work that interests us is his religious and economic reforms, and indeed some of the scholars, when they deal with these, consider that the restoration of the military defenses was subsidiary to his later work of restoring justice according to the Mosaic Law. We know little of his visits to any of the other cities of Judea, and we may decide that the meeting at the water gate and that of confronting the landlords took place in or near Jerusalem.

The description of the first one gives me the impression that the site was the marketplace or a spacious court within the wall. When the Book of the Law was read, Ezra stood in a pulpit high above the people, and there were gathered about him many priests and elders. Perhaps it was here that the people came with Nehemiah to make their protests against the injustices of the usurers and landlords. To my mind it is one of the most amazing things in biblical literature that the scholars have completely misunderstood the significance of this report, notwithstanding the fact that it is known as "Nehemiah's memoirs" and forms the kernel of his message. That the story of the protests of the poor should be overlooked does not seem reasonable. Indeed, we find in Isaiah and in Amos that the conditions existing in the Promised Land before 721 B.C.—long before Nehemiah was sent by Artaxerxes II to reform Israel—bore a strong resemblance to those of the fifth century.

There are other reasons for giving serious consideration to this episode. When Nehemiah began to devote himself to his chief reform—that of restoring the Law as a basis of national life—he must have known from his understanding of the Mosaic code that there could be no spiritual concord so long as stark poverty stalked in the land. Moses knew that religion thrived upon a full stomach because the mass of people are never inclined to asceticism. "A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness" (Deut. 8:9). Only Elijahs are fed by ravens; lesser people have to produce food in the sweat of their brows, if they get the chance to use the earth, where milk and honey abound.

The two episodes described in Nehemiah with reportorial acumen were also the burden of testimony of Amos and Isaiah as to the paralyzing effect of the removal of the landmark upon Israel. When Nehemiah realized the havoc that had been wrought by landlords and usurers, he knew it was impossible for him to bring the people back to a strict observance of the Law while that condition existed. That it did exist is made plain in chapter after chapter from Nehemiah to Malachi. As we proceed with the investigation of this problem, the land question becomes one of primary importance to the people who were called upon to lead a religious life in accordance with the Mosaic Law.

There is another aspect of this which is worth our consideration. How did Nehemiah carry these reforms into effect? He did not form an administration, select a cabinet of yes-men, a secretary for a dozen overlapping departments. We do not learn that there was any one man to give him counsel. Indeed, it may be said that he was the perfect type of absolute dictator, and that the crisis he had to deal with was one that called for a man of one mind. It was not a political achievement in the ordinary sense of the term. There is no suggestion in the stories of these two episodes that political tinkers dealt with the emergency; no poulticing of old sores. It must be kept in mind that Nehemiah was sent by the Persians and that Palestine remained a Persian province. He was assigned the task of restoring a national life for Jewry, and he seems to have been restricted to Jerusalem and the area in the immediate vicinity.

It was adroit strategy on the part of Nehemiah to begin his work of restoration by calling the people together to repair the breaches in the wall; in setting them to work on an enterprise that made a strong appeal to their memory of a Jerusalem that was a glory when the Temple of Solomon was finished. Their sires had looked upon the wall as the invulnerable girdle of their faith. Whether this was so or not, the people rallied to the call of Nehemiah, and what was broken was made whole.

All this, however, was preparatory work for the greater undertaking, which was to restore justice, in the Mosaic sense, as a basis for reviving the ideal of a contented people living according to the Law. Here Nehemiah had the genius to see that economic justice would foster spiritual betterment. It was, of course, not a ritual with him. He had it in the Law, as expounded by Moses himself.

Many writers deal with the problem of the wall as a defensive measure against some foe, which was the charge made by Sanballat, the chief opponent of Nehemiah. How this notion of it can be nurtured is difficult to explain because in the Book of Nehemiah there is no reference to a garrison or an arsenal. There could not have been an army there when Nehemiah entered the city, for if they were Persian they would have left when he took over his mission. So the wall has another significance, and I think that in this case we are not wrong if we regard it as a symbol of a glorious memory that still lived in the minds of the people after so much vicissitude.

The landmark is the symbol of economic justice—divine law! How this has been missed by so many of the Bible scholars is a mystery, for it stands out clearly in the commands given by Moses, and its violation is emphasized with the most terrible curse (Deut. 27:17). One reason for the oversight may be the failure to realize that the Law was universal. I can imagine some authors putting it aside with the notion that it applied to a small peasantry, and that it was not to be considered as a law that could be extended to civilized communities.

These misconceptions are due to reading into ancient script notions of the present. That cannot be done. Indeed, the term justice has been submitted to such a mangling by lawyers and by some modern philosophers that it has lost not only its economic meaning but its divine one also.

For a review of this system, in which the reader will find information in more detail than there is space here to deal with, I should advise him to turn to chapter IV of my work, *The Eleventh Commandment.*[3] There he will find my views upon India, China, Babylon, Greece, Rome and other old civilizations. The similarity of their concepts of economic law based on justice is so clear that one might think one mind guided all the founders of the early cultures. Hesiod's *Works and Days* seems to be linked to the Code of Hammurabi. Many of the rules and regulations for the cultivation of the land, which are found in the *Li Ki*, have their counterpart in the laws of Egypt, which called for a new survey of the land every year or two for purposes of restoring the boundaries.

In the study I made for readers of *The Eleventh Commandment*, I gave the names of a good many works that deal with this too often neglected principle of the landmark in ancient civilizations, which was regarded as the symbol of economic justice. The idea persisted in the minds of people for over three thousand years at least. The injustice condemned by Nehemiah is, in principle, the same one that is undermining the stability of every megalopolitan people in the world.

In the fifth century B.C., when Nehemiah began to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and was bent on restoring a just system for Judea, similar undertakings were begun in Greece and Rome. In this respect it might be called the century of the search for justice. Socrates was at the Piraeus with his friends, debating the economic and political conditions the Greeks had experienced, and sought the solution of them in a just order. We read in Plato's *Republic* how Socrates brought to the mind of his companions the economic essentials of a true State and the attributes of a just man.

The legend is that at about the same time, Rome had sent to Athens an embassy to learn the laws of Solon. At any rate the Greek influence is clearly established. The story of the making of the Twelve Tables is one of the most fascinating that can be read about the endeavors of a people to accept laws that would enable the citizens to live under a just system and enjoy the fruits of their labor.

In tracing the evolution of a just land system, an ambitious young historian might produce a worthy volume. If he were to link up these three endeavors of Judea, Greece and Rome with the guiding principle of the basic law of the Israelites, he would do much to reaffirm the dictum of Wellhausen that justice is the keyword for the understanding of the history of the Jews.

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[3] New York, Viking Press, 1933; reprinted Appleton, Wis., Nelson Publ. Co., 1944.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE BOOK OF JOB

I think it is well to begin my remarks upon the Book of Job by declaring that it is an allegory, a poem of unusually profound ideas which, up to the time of this writing, has baffled the wit of the archaeologist, while it has brought from the great scholars essay after essay in which they have contributed many various interpretations of it. It has been compared to the *Iliad*, but in many respects it differs from the Homeric epic. There is no historical basis for it. Its character is no Agamemnon and his dwelling place is no Troy. Yet, there are strains in it that remind us of the works of the Greek writers of tragedy. The cruel demand of Artemis that Agamemnon should sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia is in the nature of the edict of an unseen power, and we may find something akin in motive to the cruel fate for which Apollo destined Oedipus. The old gods were sometimes merciless in dealing with men. They seemed to take pleasure in putting spiritual and physical endurance to the test, under bitter tribulation.

Aeschylus gives us no reason why Agamemnon should suffer before his ship sailed. He had taken up the cause of his brother, whose wife had been stolen by Paris; and as for Oedipus, he was wholly blameless for the terrible punishment inflicted upon him by Apollo. It is such instances of the whims of the old gods to use man as a plaything, which prepare our minds to delve deeply into the case of Job, for the purpose of trying to discover what the poet really intended to convey to us. This is the problem that is presented, and it undoubtedly originated as an old folk tale, which has a symbolic value. This latter notion largely depends upon the date when it was composed, which will be taken into serious consideration when I attempt to make clear the meaning of the allegory.

Whether or not the proem was added after the main part of the tribulations of Job began, it seems to me that the author has gone skillfully to work as a dramatist to reveal the status of his protagonists. It is in the first chapter that we become acquainted with the type of person who is to be stricken, through no particular fault of his own. Indeed, I think that it makes all the difference to an understanding of the poem if at the outset we are told who the one to suffer is, and, at the same time, know what position he has held in the community. The first three verses read as follows:

> There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.
>
> And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

> His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east (Job 1:1-3).

This is a perfect example of concise description of a hero, and I fail to find any reason why the poem should not begin with it.

We may now look further into the status of this remarkable man, presented with a clarity seldom given to an Old Testament character. Where in Scripture is another one placed before us who "eschewed evil"? Of no man of action can this be said. To find men like Job we should have to go to some of the prophets. He was "perfect and upright" and "feared God," and yet he was permitted by Yahweh to suffer an extremely painful disease.

We may also take it that he was a loyal husband and a kind parent, for he had seven sons and three daughters. This gives us a notion of the age of Job. He must have reached middle life, and to do this in any part of the world at that day without committing sin was an extraordinary achievement. The poet tells us that he was the "greatest of all the men of the east." The description of his possessions bears this out to the full. The domain that he held may easily be imagined if one has any knowledge of the size of a ranch necessary for breeding and fattening cattle for the market on a large scale. The pastures that would be needed for the beasts that are mentioned in verse 3 must have covered not only a wide territory but also one that would allow moving the herds for fodder, according to the seasons. I estimate that he must have been the largest single landholder pagan history has known. No wonder he had a great household. With such domains and enormous herds, Job must have been a very Croesus of his time.

It is this description which we must ponder well before we come to the reason for Yahweh's decision to let Satan have him in his power. It is in this scene, when Satan challenges the spiritual integrity of one who "feared God," that we find for the first time a case of direct opposition by the power of evil to the will of Yahweh. It reveals the faith of the god in its creature to endure the direst tribulation suffered, by wiping out his family and household and destroying his possessions. The challenge is taken, but Satan, although allowed a free hand to strip Job of children, his estate and all it contained, is not permitted to touch Job. After Job is bereft of all those who were dear to him and nothing is left of his fortune, he cries out:

> . . . Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord (1:21).

Rich men are the prize prey of the wiles and enmity of Satan, because he takes more pleasure in the downfall of the high and mighty than in the ordinary evils of the wretched and the poor. The deeper the fall, the greater his satisfaction in achieving it.

After this, Satan returned to confront Yahweh, for the evil that he had wrought had not wrung from Job the curse that he expected. Another test was to be inflicted upon him:

> And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.
> But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.
> And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.
> So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.
> And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes (2:4-8).

Three friends who have heard of the calamity that has fallen upon him come to condole with him. Job receives them in silence, and for seven days no word passes. It is Job who is the first to speak:

> And Job spake, and said,
> Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.
> Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.
> Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.
> As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.
> Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein.
> Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.
> Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day:
> Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.
>
> . . . .
>
> Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul;
> Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;
> Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?
> Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?
> For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.
> For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

> I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came (3:2-10, 20-26).

Where shall we look in classical or medieval literature for an outburst of woe, plumbing the depths of despair, comparable to this?

The critical observations of the three friends succeed only in drawing from Job a descriptive survey of the helplessness of men to divine the Creator's will, and the three separate debates have furnished the clergy of several denominations with phrases that confounded the wit of Bible students of sixty years ago. One point we should not overlook is the confessed fault of Job that he did not know the secrets of nature. If we could start with this, before the friends arrive to comfort him, we might more easily follow the trend of the debates that ensue. To me this is the perennial sin of the creatures of creation. Man's unwillingness or reluctance to discover the will of God, as expressed in Nature, is the besetting crime of those who depend upon it for their sustenance.

The ignorance of rich and poor as to the meaning of creation was the cause of most of the evils that afflicted the children of Jacob. It was not until the declaration of the prophet of Nazareth that knowledge of this was declared for all to hear and try to understand. "I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 13:35).

No matter how righteously a man has lived, how rich he may be and respected by his neighbors; no matter how worthy he may be as the head of a family and how generous in his dealings with the poor, if he knows not this secret that creation is for all men to use and enjoy according to their needs, he falls short of the link that binds him to God. Is this not the true lesson for us to learn from this allegory?

It has sometimes occurred to me, when I have returned to the debates of the three friends held with Job, that there was much in them that reminded me of William of Ockham. This idea impressed me so deeply that I turned to a book that has recently been published upon *Medieval Thought*, by Gordon Leff (Penguin, 1958). For the student who desires to supplement his knowledge of the many discursive trends on Bible criticism, he cannot do better than procure this unusual manual. It is packed with essential information concerning the differences of opinion held by eminent scholarly inquirers into the deepest problems of God and the universe. Here is a passage that is akin in idea of the Godhead to many of the observations of Job's friends:

> . . . "God can, if He wills, dispense with all order in awarding man final glory." In consequence a habit of grace lost its intrinsic worth; free will alone became the *sine qua non* for reward; God could enable a man to hate Him; beatitude could be inefficacious; grace and sin could coexist.[1]

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[1] Quoted in *Medieval Thought*, p. 289.

This declaration seems to me to fit the case of Job. I put this before my readers as a mere suggestion, which is certainly worth considering when the discourses of the three friends raise perplexing problems.

My mind goes back to the days when sincere Bible students of the working classes wondered how it was possible to settle upon the Creator, a beneficent all-Father, the blame for the evil that men do. This is paraphrasing it in my own brief way, for they were not adept in framing direct questions; but I can assure the reader that this is a fair summary of their queries.

Of all the contradictions to be found in the Old Testament and the Gospels, this is the one that has been the cause of thousands of debates and is still the one that makes for so many different denominational interpretations of its import. Good is not evil, and though some may argue that evil may produce good, such hair-splitting dialectics do not help us to a solution. That good and evil exist in men no one can deny. All history relates the crimes of men, perpetrated in religious wars as well as in political ones. To hold the Creator responsible for the evil men do is surely a denial of His love for His creatures in providing the necessary source of their sustenance. Surely, good and evil combined in the same body are human only, for nothing in nature is like it. Indeed, man himself had to decide which plant was uneatable and which one nourished him. This was left entirely to his judgment, and this was before the day when a Satan was present to tempt him to eat the poisonous herb. If there be one attribute man has developed since he made his appearance, it is his power to decide what is good for him and what is not. Perhaps no one put it in clearer terms than Joseph Butler, the Bishop of Durham, the clearest-thinking divine of the English church. His famous work, *The Analogy of Religion*, is scarcely ever referred to nowadays, and that fact is a censorious one which indicates the poverty of clear understanding so often noticed in the works of the Bible scholars.

I have a copy of Butler's work which gives two or three pages of reviews from critics whose names are well known. To read the opinions of men like Sir James Mackintosh makes one hope that some far-seeing publisher will give us another edition of this invaluable book. Butler sums up the whole matter in a page. Small wonder the work was considered by the eminent men of that period to be unanswerable! However, it is quite another matter to consider it as a model of pure reasoning to be welcomed by the clergy in general. To some extent the Nonconformist bodies read it and quoted from it, but it failed to turn the community from their old ways of thinking.

In this the student should find some of the answers to the problems raised by Job's friends, but I doubt very much whether it will help us to avert the wrath to come. We are too steeped in materialism and the vagaries of science. We have long departed from our natural condition, and the secrets of nature today are uncovered mainly for the purpose of contriving machines of destruction. To blame God for all this is nothing but an absurd attempt to shift responsibility. The evil that exists in the world is wrought by men. The God of the universe is still good, and no matter what science may achieve, Nature will remain to give the lie to their vain attempts to cooperate with the Creator.

Job remains adamant. He defeats the devil and wins his reward for his faith. All is restored to him. May I suggest that Job is a symbol which represents at first hand the glory of Israel if it had obeyed the Mosaic Law. The tribes were to "eat bread without scarceness," and no limit was placed upon what could be produced from the holdings they acquired when the settlement was complete. They were to enjoy the good things they produced from the earth, and the fixed law of the use-holding of land was "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark." Does Job, as the proprietor of a vast domain and enormous herds, represent the wrong that was committed by adding field to field? In the poem there is a verse or two which indicates that he was conscious of this:

> Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?
>
> Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.
>
> They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.
>
> They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together (24:1-4).

Adding field to field, a practice mentioned many times in the Old Testament, became endemic, as it were, and affected the whole country round about. As it spread, it respected no person. In Job's case the just and the unjust were afflicted.

"He who steals a rod from the Common will take an acre without the consent of the State." Pliny says, "Great estates ruined Italy." However, in the case of Job it was not a matter of robbing a monastery to fatten a baron.

We may assume that the poet means to prove to us that a man may, in the ordinary course of business transactions, add to his possessions to the disadvantage of his fellows and yet be hailed as a righteous man who does no evil. Could he be called a victim of the system? And does not the allegory show conclusively that Job was that victim?

Now as to the disease that falls upon him. Surely it is the spiritual and physical degeneration of Israel, which like a leprosy eats into the body and consumes its vitality. Job is the Mosaic ideal gone wrong, and the boils from which he suffers are evils—religious, economic and political—of the children of Jacob. Nevertheless, the poem holds out all the blessings of hope that redemption can offer. All Israel has to do is to return to God and keep His commandments.

In an essay of rare understanding, Professor H. H. Rowley gives us a thorough investigation into the problem of suffering, as it is laid out in the poem of Job. This contribution to the controversy will be found in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* for September 1958 (Vol. 41, No. 1). Dr. Rowley is Professor of Hebrew Language and Literature in the University of Manchester. He is held by his colleagues in Bible literature to be a scholar of high repute.

There are, however, so many different approaches to an appreciation of the reason why the poem was written that it would be well for the student to understand that Professor Rowley has given us only one important consideration of the problems that have perplexed so many of the commentators who have dealt especially with the trials and tribulations of Job. In this connection, I would recommend the work of Robert Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, which will be found helpful to the Bible reader who has been engrossed in the study of it. Pfeiffer simplifies the process of determining the trend of the debates of the friends, which bring from Job the deepest expressions of his pain. This Pfeiffer does by separating the debates into three cycles. Thus, the work of Pfeiffer on this subject is of inestimable value in presenting the story with a clarity of interpretation that is unusual. Perhaps it would be better for the student to read what Pfeiffer has to say about it before he studies Professor Rowley's brilliant essay.

It should be made clear from the first that Job knows nothing about the challenge of Satan to Yahweh. In this it is essential to keep in mind that it is the tribal god Yahweh who has given consent to Satan to inflict the bitterest suffering upon Job through the loss of all his worldly possessions and his family, and the affliction of a disease almost beyond endurance. Job, who knows nothing of Satan's challenge, attributes his woes to the god.

It is strange to me how so many of the Bible scholars miss the import of this extraordinary work. If suffering were the one and only problem it presents, it would have no unusual significance in the history of human woe. There must be other reasons besides those that are given to us for the catastrophic blow and pain inflicted upon the chief character. I think it is incumbent upon Bible students who are concerned with trying to find an elucidation of this work to search in it for a reason why it was composed.

It seems to me that Professor Rowley is conscious of these other points that seem to elude so many of the critics. In one of several of the summings up of the evidence he finds in the poem, he tells us:

> . . . One purpose of the book of Job is certainly to protest against the idea that misfortune is the evidence of sin, and to affirm that there is a problem of innocent suffering. . . . What the book of Job says is that there is something more fundamental than the intellectual solution of life's mysteries. The author has a message for the spirit rather than for

> the intellect. . . . He knows that . . . men have a spirit, and that all may suffer. When one is suffering it may be good to understand the cause. . . .[2]

In this poem, as in so much of the content of the Books of the Old Testament, we should establish at the beginning the economic ground for the work. Indeed, in a general way, I should place the order of investigation for the Bible student as follows: economic, religious, political. Man was a land animal before he was religious, and he was religious before he became a politician. Notwithstanding Aristotle to the contrary, this order of inquiry stands.

In following this course I have found it a method of avoiding much confusion. Several of the critics have offered interpolations that scarcely express the idea in the mind of the writer. These minor defects force me to think that many of them are not grounded in fundamental economics; otherwise they would not confuse religious and political affairs with those that are basically economic. Someone has said that when the Bible is read as a religious-economic treatise, it will be better understood. I support this statement.

For a symbolical understanding of the great poem, it is not necessary to spend time upon such matters as whether the proem preceded the rest or whether it was put in afterward. The value of the proem is in the description of the economic and social condition of Job at the outset. Surely this is necessary, for it gives us one of the chief defects for which he suffers, namely, pride in worldly affairs. He is rich and has abundance and a happy family. It would be difficult to walk humbly in such circumstances, for the people about him looking for assistance and other advantages would be time-servers and sycophants. The effect of their tributes would be hard to withstand.

The Book of Job should be read as a poem placed in a drama, as if the three friends, after the manner of the chorus in the Greek drama, broke the continuity of the plot and gave pause to remind the audience that what they are seeing and hearing has quite another meaning, which lies beyond the artifice of the dramatist, and that is its significance in a cosmic sense. Making the locale of the active drama a world of action in which transcendent values are transmuted by the poet and bequeathed to the souls who watch the play belongs to the genius of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, and the poem of Job is not less worthy of distinction than *Agamemnon* or *Oedipus Rex*.

Surely this is no extravagant view to take of the Book of Job. The Hebrew poet, whether an Edomite or an Israelite, was not restrained in expressing himself by being shackled to mundane affairs. The rhapsodical symbolist never fails to shed a luster upon the descriptions of even the dire consequences of perversity to the moral code. The mind of the poet was stored with rays of light, which shine forth in the Book of Job like gold glistening in its bed of earth.

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[2] *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (September 1958), "The Book of Job and its Meaning," pp. 199-200.

There are verses that make me feel the poet takes a joy in exaltation, as if drawn up by the magnets of the stars to a peak from which he views the turmoil and suffering of men, in dark contrast to the peace and order of the firmament.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE GREEK INFLUENCE

Bible students who have sought diligently in the works of the eminent critics of the past fifty years for a fuller narrative of changes that took place in Judea and Israel are surprised to find many chapters devoted to influences that are not mentioned in the Gospels, or for that matter in the Old Testament. The most important is that of the influence of the Greeks. It is not easy to follow the reasonings of some of the eminent critics who have dealt with this influence at great length. Too much stress is put upon the Macedonian invasion and the Alexandria of the period of Philo. To my mind this is starting some centuries too late.

There had been at work for centuries before Alexander came down from the north influences of Hellenization that were more potent and more likely to be established in the routine of everyday affairs than anything philosophers or poets could give to the Jews. These were the astonishing mercantile businesses by land and sea, which drew many of the better-educated Jews to marts far beyond the Promised Land.

The way must have been made ready for the Macedonian avalanche long before Aristotle became the tutor of Alexander. Who, knowing the story of how commerce carried culture from mercantile centers to trading posts, can doubt the early spread of Greek ideas and wares of earlier days, when we realize that Babylon in the time of Hammurabi was in touch with Damascus and probably with Jericho? Both of these great cities have been considered by archaeologists the oldest in the world.

There is much reason to think that Greek trade two hundred years before Alexander was directed to the coastal towns of Asia Minor, which led to Syria, to Damascus, and to Antioch, centers of a great trunk system that connected with Samaria, Judea and Egypt in the south. The importance of understanding this should be plain enough, for it was the Hellenization of the Hebrews which, in great measure, accounts for the extraordinary changes that took place in religious, commercial, and social affairs. No one has suggested that the natives were skilled artisans, making wares for export or that they carried on commercial and financial pursuits. The Old Testament chapters are bare of facts concerning these matters. However, in connection with their philosophical and literary achievements during the period of the Ptolemies at Alexandria and elsewhere, we learn from non-biblical sources how all this changed their old notions of nationalism and religious ceremonies.

In the days of Pericles (*c.* 450 B.C.) the Piraeus was the largest and busiest port in the world. It may be said that all routes by land and sea converged upon Athens; and how proud Pericles was of his beloved city may be gathered from his speeches. Within one century the masters of philosophy, drama, politics, and sculpture lived and worked. What a gallery it was—to mention only a few of them: Aeschylus, Phidias, Sophocles, Pericles, Socrates and Plato. It was in this period that Greek became the language of the educated classes in many parts of their world.

Romaine Paterson, in his book *The Nemesis of Nations*,[1] says of Athens in the time of Pericles, that the Piraeus was a very busy port, her docks crowded with ships. Pericles reminded his countrymen:

> . . . The magnitude of our city draws the produce of the world into our harbor, so that to the Athenian the fruits of other countries are as familiar a luxury as those of his own. . . . We throw open our city to the world, and never by alien acts exclude foreigners.[2]

At Athens a statue was raised to the unknown gods. Paul misread the inscription and put it in the singular. Many of the scholars now hold that the word was in the plural, which was indicative of the catholicity of the mind of Pericles and betokened his desire to give all strangers welcome to the city.

In that monumental work edited by Professor Jacques Lacour-Gayet, *Histoire de la Commerce*,[3] the contributors tell us that over the old trade routes of the ancient peoples, commerce in language and in merchandise carried culture to the outposts. So it was with the Greeks, and their traveling merchants were for the most part men who spoke the language correctly because they would trade with the rich and better-educated classes who gradually began to adopt the Greek tongue.

Therefore, we have good reason for thinking that the way was well paved for the campaigns of Alexander of Macedon probably hundreds of years before his armies descended upon Palestine. This is interesting to us because we wonder how Galilee was affected by the battles that were fought in Syria. After the fall of Tyre and Sidon, Alexander moved down to Gaza, and then to Egypt.

Alexander, in his turn, founded more than seventy cities, according to Plutarch. These became centers of commerce and culture. Samaria was destroyed by Perdiccas and rebuilt as a Greek city. Dr. Pfeiffer tells us:

> . . . These centers of Greek life proved to be at the same time the strength and the weakness of Hellenism in Asia. The greatest among them—capitals of kingdoms such as Alexandria, Pergamum, Antioch, Seleucia—attracted the best minds, not only for government service but also for the development of the arts and sciences, and thus became centers of

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[1] London, J. M. Dent, 1907, p. 175.

[2] Thucydides, *Hist. of the Peloponnesian War*, II, 39.

[3] Five vols., Paris, Editions Spid, 1950.

> learning to which pupils flocked and from which they eventually spread Greek culture elsewhere. But, as a result of these conditions, Hellenism prevailed only in the cities and chiefly among the upper classes of native populations. The countryside where rural folk retained their old languages and customs, was scarcely affected by Hellenism.[4]

And Dr. Hermann Guthe, in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, explains further:

> . . . It was in the newly-founded or newly-colonised Greek cities that this process began, and it was even later confined in general to the towns (the settled country was now Aramaic, the desert Arabian). Greek education, art, and trade were pursued; new markets were opened up; luxury and unstinted self-indulgence gave life a seductive lustre. It was the Jews outside of Jerusalem, in the Diaspora, that made the first acquaintance with Hellenism. . . . It is . . . likely that trade interests led the Jews abroad, and that allied families joined them in the leading commercial towns. Here they learned to speak, think, and live as Greeks. . . .[5]

With the death of Alexander, his empire was divided among his generals. In the third century B.C. war broke out repeatedly between successive kings of Egypt and Syria. After the Seleucids got control of Palestine in 200, the country assumed a new importance as a buffer between Syria and Egypt.

When the Jews returned from their exile in Babylon, there had been a great change in their religious life. Deutero-Isaiah, the prophet of the exile, describes it as a purification. Dr. Cornill tells us of the change in the following words:

> There is accomplished in the Babylonian exile, and as a consequence of it, that remarkable transformation which makes of the Judean state a Jewish church, of the Israelitish people a Jewish religious congregation.[6]

But now, a century and a half later, the Jews were torn by family troubles. Dr. E. R. Bevan, Honorary Fellow of New College, Oxford, and lecturer in Hellenistic history and literature at King's College, London, has written an excellent summary of the intricacies of the quarrels in his chapter for the *Cambridge Ancient History*.[7]

There were two families contending in Jerusalem at that time for leadership—the Oniadae and the Tobiadae. Dr. Guthe suggests: "Perhaps the question was one of political ascendancy more than of religious antagonism. Matters came to an open conflict under Ptolemy VI (173 B.C.)."[8]

The quarrels brought about the intervention of the Seleucid treasurer

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[4] *Hist. of NT Times*, p. 96.

[5] *Loc. cit.*, "Israel," II, 2260.

[6] *Hist. of the People of Israel*, p. 147.

[7] "Syria and the Jews," *Camb. Anc. Hist.*, Vol. VIII, ch. XVI, pp. 495-533.

[8] *Ency. Bibl.*, "Israel," II, 2261.

Heliodorus (Apollonius? II Macc. 5:24), who attempted to enter the Temple of Jerusalem and seize the treasure. Thus, in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the Great, there were two parties in Jerusalem: one nationalist and the other wishing to accept Greek culture.

> Antiochus wished to destroy with a firm hand the real roots of opposition, and, accordingly, directed his measures against the Jewish religion. The cultus was suppressed; the altar of burnt offering was changed into a place of sacrifice to Zeus (I Macc. 1:54, 59); the Torah rolls were burnt; Jewish customs (Sabbath, circumcision, etc.) were forbidden; those who remained faithful to the law in spite of the pressure brought to bear on them were executed (December 168 B.C.). The high priest submitted. He plainly regarded it as possible to retain, as a Hellenistic Jew, the position of head of the Jewish community. . . .[9]

As a consequence Judea flamed into revolt. Judas, known as Maccabeus, a member of the Hasmonean family, led the insurrection. Jews under him secured their independence, which was to last only eighty years. Meanwhile what began as a religious war soon developed into a political conflict, and the essential teaching of the Latter Prophets was lost to posterity.

Scholars have stressed so often the Greek influence upon the thought of the Hebrews that we wonder if the people of Galilee, whether of the old Canaanite strain or the remnants of the families of Issachar and Zebulun, were affected by the speech and manners of the invaders. Would it be unreasonable to think that the better-to-do people in the cities near Lake Galilee were impervious to this?

This is important, for we shall find much in the sayings of Jesus and his attitude to life that will remind us of the Stoics and Socrates. But he spoke only Aramaic. Still, there were probably people in Galilee who knew Greek, although their own language was the same as that of Jesus. These matters are of great moment, and some of them have posed difficult questions for the critics of the Gospels. I could name several who have attempted to deal with this problem of Greek influence: Streeter, Loisy, Dr. Barnes, Bultmann, and Guignebert. It might be said that Galilee itself is the greatest puzzle of all we meet in the Bible, for it referred to different areas at different times. For long periods she seems to have been isolated, forgotten. My own explanation is that she was like a trench or a moat, marking a division between ravages from the north and from the south. It is strange how she seems to have pursued an independent course at all times after the settlement.

The Aramean influence in that section is of interest to us. Professor Noth, in the *History of Israel*, devotes a good deal of space to Galilee. He tells us that parts of it at certain periods were untilled. After the Egyptian conquest, the tribe of Issachar bought their independence by cultivating its soil. Thus, the name Issachar means "laborer,"[10] from which we might gather that after the settlement, most of that territory was used by a peasantry. Perhaps the reason why we know so little about Galilee as a land worth possessing by a conquering army is that peasants are not a prey who yield tribute worth collecting when the loot of a city can be taken.

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[9] *Ibid.*, p. 2262.

Later, in the first century B.C., as the power of Rome spread to the east and the Seleucid kings became more and more feeble, Pompey was sent to the Levant as the representative of Rome. When, in 63 B.C., a quarrel broke out between two Hasmonean princes, who were brothers, and it was submitted to Pompey, he decided for the elder brother. It was thus that Herod, the Edomite (Idumean), became king of the Jews in 40 B.C.

[10] *Cf. supra*, p. 126.

CHAPTER XXX

THE SEPTUAGINT

The Old Testament was compiled and edited by Jewish elders as late as the middle of the third century B.C. It appeared first in Greek. The story of how a king of Egypt called together six Jewish scholars from each tribe to come to Alexandria and perform the work reads like a romance. It was Ptolemy II (the famous ruler who gave to the world of his day the great library at Alexandria, a city at the mouth of the Nile that was to become the very center of at least two schools of religious thought), who advanced the aims of Christendom in all parts of Europe.

The island of Pharos, the site of the lighthouse which was one of the wonders of the world, was chosen for the meeting place of the Jewish elders who had to perform the work. The story of Aristeas concerning the undertaking and its progress has been treated skeptically by some of the scholars, who have decided that it was "Jewish propaganda under a heathen mark." But upon closer examination it has been corroborated in some respects. For it is said that the Babylonian Talmud supports the testimony of Aristeas. The clearest statement of this controversy will be found in a work called *How Our Bible Came to Us*, written by Canon H. G. G. Herklots.[1]

For our purpose, we may put the debate aside as to the historical value of the *Letter of Aristeas* and turn our minds to the condition in Alexandria at the time the Bible appeared in Greek. After the invasion of Alexandria, there was a little exodus from Palestine of the well-to-do, educated Jews, who found a home in the land where Moses was born. The descendants of the captives, who had been held as slaves for about four hundred years, found welcome and security under a wise monarch. That educated Jews, even before the Macedonian invasion, were reputed to be Greek minded in philosophical and commercial affairs we learn from the works of many of the scholars. Greek influence permeated the thought of the Hebrews of superior rank along the southern coastal route of Asia Minor and down through Lebanon and Syria to Jerusalem.

Robert Pfeiffer in discussing the Gospels and philosophy tells us: "Just as the gospel of Jesus had to be transplanted by Paul into the great centers of the Roman world before it became one of the pillars of modern civilization, so the spread of Greek culture through the conquests of Alexander made of Hellenism the other pillar of our civilization."[2]

Therefore, in Alexandria, at the time of Ptolemy there were gathered together accomplished Jews whose scholarship was of high rank. As the years passed by, there seemed to be a blending of such schools as that of Philo and later of the one that was headed by Clement, who was the master of Origen. What we owe to the strange mixture of Hebrew and Greek in literature and art can scarcely be computed.

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[1] New York, Oxford University Press, 1954, ch. IX.

[2] *Hist. of NT Times*, p. 98.

There are many students who seem to be ignorant of the fact that we owe the preservation of the Books of the Maccabees to the Septuagint. The importance of this should not be overlooked because the revolt of Judas and his brothers took place during one of the most critical periods in the history of the Jews, and it must have been remembered by the grandfather or great-grandfather of Jesus.

Dr. Martin Noth, the German scholar, tells us:

> Where the real historical tradition of the Old Testament comes to an end, there is, to begin with, a painful gap in the sources of the history of Israel. It is only when we reach the second and third quarter of the 2nd century B.C. that a detailed historical tradition becomes available once more in the two books of Maccabees which have come down to us in the framework of the Hellenistic form of the Old Testament, that is, the Greek Septuagint. It is true that they also present some problems, above all concerning the relation of the two books of Maccabees to one another, but they do contain so much concrete historical information that the period they describe is one of the best known in the history of Israel. . . .[3]

One reason that the Books of the Maccabees were relatively unknown is that they were omitted in the canon of the Massoretic text and placed in the Apocrypha. However, they are included in the Douay version.

The period of the gap Dr. Noth refers to is one that may assume a significance little dreamed of twenty years ago. The date and source of the Dead Sea Scrolls have raised the question of the time of the origin of the order responsible for their preservation and for hiding them afterwards in the jars found in the caves. There can be little doubt that conditions in Judea for a long time before the Maccabean revolt were so desperate that pious men were driven to seek refuge in some safe place. The monastery of Khirbet Qumran is located in a spot about seven miles south of Jericho, on the west side of the Dead Sea. Professor G. R. Driver of Oxford says:

> Palestine has had a long and troubled history, and the fugitives who hid these Scrolls in the cave near Jericho might be fleeing not from the persecution which Antiochus Epiphanes set in motion (165 B.C.) . . . but from some local tumult caused by racial or religious hatred of which history has preserved no record.[4]

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[3] *Hist. of Israel*, p. 43.

[4] *The Hebrew Scrolls*, Friends of Dr. Williams's Library Lecture, 1950, Oxford University Press, 1951, p. 50.

The finding of these scrolls may lead to other discoveries: for example, the first Greek translation from the Aramaic source used in the Gospels. Luke must have known there were other versions in existence when he wrote, at the beginning of his Gospel: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand. . . ." Does he refer to Mark and Matthew? What other versions would there be in existence when Luke wrote? The critics are far from agreeing upon dates of the writing of the first three Gospels. Some of them differ to the extent of twenty or thirty years. The earliest date I have found for the Gospel of Luke is about A.D. 100, about seventy years after the death of Jesus.

There is a lesson to be learned in this, if we keep in mind the work of the Hebrew elders in compiling the Septuagint. No critic that I have read seems to imagine it contained all that was then known of Hebrew sacred writings. The Book of Baruch is not included in it, although Baruch was a friend of Jeremiah. Another peculiar case of "pick-and-choose work" is that of Esther. Concerning the omissions, Robert Pfeiffer informs us that there was much more in the Greek version than in the Hebrew one. He says:

> The Book of Esther . . . is extant in a number of widely different recensions, all of which contain material lacking in the canonical book. . . . The Greek text (and its Latin versions) is the only one of these enlarged editions of the canonical book which dates back to pre-Christian times. . . . The Greek text contains a number of longer narratives or other writings entirely lacking in the Hebrew canonical book, and occasionally contradicting the canonical story. The Hebrew text includes 163 verses, the Greek 270, or 107 additional ones. . . .[5]

Must we take it that the books and the verses rejected were not inspired, or would it be more correct to say that the Hebrew selectors who gathered at Pharos were inspired? No matter how we decide this matter, we cannot avoid the notion that the inspired books of the Bible, as we know it, had to undergo many changes at the hands of compilers and editors, who had their own ideas as to what should be published and what rejected.

Sir Frederic Kenyon, formerly Chief Librarian of the British Museum, in his book, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, tells us:

> . . . The Septuagint . . . is a complete translation of the Old Testament, containing indeed not only the books which now compose our Old Testament, but also those which, after a considerable period of uncertainty, were finally excluded from the Hebrew Canon and now constitute our Apocrypha. Further, it is preserved in several manuscripts of very great age, the earliest, as we shall see presently, going back to the second century after Christ, not to mention a scrap which is even earlier. In every respect, both textually and historically, the Greek version of the Old Testament is by far the most important of all the ancient translations. On the one hand, it is our chief means of testing

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[5] *Hist. of NT Times*, p. 304.

> the accuracy of the Massoretic Hebrew text, and of correcting it when it is wrong; and, on the other, it has been the Bible of Greek Christendom from the earliest age of Christianity down to this present day. . . . Greek became the common language of intercourse between people of different nationalities in the East, and the Jews in Egypt learnt, before long, to use it as their native tongue. Hence there arose the necessity of having their Scriptures accessible in Greek; and the answer to this demand was the version known as the Septuagint. . . .[6]

If we were to try to decide today what has been the real history of the world since the beginning of this century, we should find opinions so divided and differing at such wide points that we would give up the task of writing it according to our own views. The besetting difficulty in this is the attitude of mind of the author who takes up his pen, with the honest intention of stating what he believes. Can he dissociate himself from the propaganda that has been used to serve national interests, or religious dogma? Few have succeeded in doing this, and yet he may not be conscious that there is a very different case to be stated. We know now how limited the field of inquiry is under a censorship, and although we do not like to admit it, the notion lurks in the mind that no book of views contrary to those disseminated by the powers that be would have much chance of finding a public.

It has been well said that history of today may be fiction tomorrow. Now this directly concerns the publication of the Septuagint. It did not please the Palestinian Jews, and even down to the time of Origen, some of it was questioned. We have Origen's letter to Africanus,[7] in which he explained his position and the reason for taking issue with some parts of the translation. Although it has survived and is still the basis of religious controversy, the story of its career through five or six centuries after it was completed at Pharos was a stormy one.

The mistranslations are dealt with by many of our scholars, but they stand. Whether or not it is a want of courage to amend them, is hard to decide. The man who takes up the task of rewriting history is something of a literary hero.

Take, for example, the mistranslation of the verse in Isaiah 7:14:

> Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The Hebrew word, which had been translated by the Greek *parthenos* or virgin, meant simply a young girl of marriageable age. Thus the Greek rendering played into the hands of Christian apologists, who "found in Isaiah a prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ."[8]

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[6] Revised by A. W. Adams, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1958, pp. 97-8.

[7] Written about A.D. 240; *see* Pfeiffer, *Introd. to the OT*, p. 108.

[8] *Cf.* Herklots, *op. cit.*, p. 116 and Ernest William Barnes, *The Rise of Christianity*, London, Longmans, 1947, p. 70.

It is an amazing experience to read the books of the critics and to learn how deep the controversies ran about the Septuagint, and how little is known of the opinions of the opposite schools, say the Hellenistic Jews and the Palestinian Jews, by Bible readers in general. It is really enough to make one think that the work of finding out what is history and what is not history is a task only for Bible scholars who understand Hebrew and Greek.

It is now a simple matter for the student to read the Septuagint side by side with the Douay version and the Authorized version. The different readings are of vital interest to him. Take, for example, the different renderings of the words "created" and "made," as they are used in Genesis;[9] and then turn to the Septuagint to find how they are given to us in the work. There are other variations that should be compared.

Five years ago an English translation was republished by the Falcon's Wing Press, and no student can afford to overlook this volume. We are indebted to Dr. C. A. Muses for the revised and enlarged edition. The Foreword to the Reader tells the story of how the first translation of the Greek text into English was undertaken by Charles Thomson as long ago as 1808. This man was a friend of Thomas Jefferson, and his repute as a scholar was admitted by many of his contemporaries.

It might be said that from the time of the meeting of the Jewish elders at Pharos to the days when Thomson completed his labors, the Septuagint was virtually a sealed work to millions of people. What has been done by the great Bible scholars during this century, to make the study of the Bible less difficult for the amateur, is a monument of industry worthy of remembrance.

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[9] *See supra*, p. 30.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE MYSTERY CULTS

The expectation of a universal change in the affairs of men, before the birth of Jesus, was not only one that was borne by the philosophers and the rich; it is shown in the histories of the time that it was a dominant idea in the religions of the proletariats and slaves in the great cities. From the Tyrrhenian Sea east across Anatolia to the upper reaches of the Tigris, and from Macedon to Sinai, and further south to the Nile, the devotees of the old beliefs had grown weary of waiting for promised utopias prophesied for so long, and awaited the change that they imagined would bring them relief. What the nature of the change would be, they did not know. Indeed, I have not found anywhere a definite description of it: whether it were to be cataclysmic or to take place slowly in different parts is not recorded by the historian.

Still, the idea that the old would pass away and the new would bring happier times seemed to be firmly founded in the minds of the peoples of the second and first centuries B.C. It cannot be said that this desire for another world was a Jewish idea, promulgated by those who, after the return from Babylon, migrated to the cities of the northwest.

Perhaps we should turn to the philosophers in our endeavor to find a reason for all this turmoil of the spirit. The fragments we have of the philosophy of Zeno have been pieced together by the scholars who have succeeded in giving us an understandable notion of the principles he expounded. They were anarchistic, solely for the use of the individual; a philosophy without religious creed, without priest or sacrifice and, thus, caused no protests from the rulers and secular authorities. There might have been some opposition to his philosophy from other sects of the Stoa, but we have no record that they were serious. Indeed, the world of thinking men, whether free or slave, had been used to ideas of a quite different system of life for some generations before Zeno appeared. Although our mentors of today find little similarity between Zeno's gospel and that of Plato, there can be no doubt that minds had been furrowed for the seed that was to be scattered by Chrysippus and his other disciples.

The enchanting daydreams, vague as they were, of the devotees of the various cults in no way deterred the people from continuing to pursue the life that had been led. Although they were promised a spiritual convulsion, to take place in the twinkling of an eye, when the rich would become just, slaves be freed, and penury disappear, with the envy and greed responsible for it, the intellectuals seemed to have disregarded these fair prospects and turned their minds to the essentials of the spirit. Alas, the life span of man is too short for him to establish firmly the new world he would create. When Socrates drank the hemlock he had lived about three score years and ten, and he left no disciples to inaugurate his system of justice. Alexander was only a little over thirty when he passed away, and nothing came of his wonderful world in which the brotherhood of man would have united all.

Surely all this points directly to the change within the individual creature but not to one affecting the community as a whole in sudden conversion. Man is either an entity in himself or, on the other hand, he is merely one amongst thousands like himself, having no particular right to himself. As a member of the so-called community, he loses his identity as an individual, and becomes a pawn of little or no consequence, merely a subject of the political power in control at the time of his existence. This may seem a heterodox notion, but are we wrong in treating it in this way? Philosophically we plume ourselves on our knowledge of our classical mentors. We think we have mastered philosophy when we can quote Plato, Socrates, Zeno and Chrysippus, to say nothing of many more who have given to thought the tools of a wisdom that never dies in the mind of the reflective person. But when we lapse into the insistent action of everyday life, we are inclined to busy ourselves with the chores of survival, under any system whatever that governs our actions.

The world as it was known for two centuries before the birth of Jesus was in a ferment of expectation; one which would change all things and make life happier. This might be called the desire for salvation. At the basis of all mystery faiths was the idea of renewal of life.

Dr. George Galloway of St. Andrews University describes it thus:

> . . . The idea of something peculiarly sacred, in which the initiated participate, is common to Mystery-Religions. The later Mystery-Cults, like those of Attis, Isis and Mithras, which were widespread in Eastern Mediterranean lands in the post-Alexandrian period, set in the foreground the spectacle of the dying and reviving god. Their votaries, through baptism, purification and a sacramental meal, somehow shared in the being of the god and with him rose to new life.[1]

The days when men went whoring after strange gods were coming to an end, and instead of many directions to one spiritual objective, there would be one, which would unite all the separate faiths and make for harmony instead of discord. But there was nothing Platonic or Stoic to be gleaned from the prospectus of the new revelation. The philosophers contributed little or nothing to the innovation. In all this the ground was being prepared for the advent of Christianity.

Professor Jülicher of Marburg University has written in the *Encyclopaedia*

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[1] *Ency. Brit.*, 14th ed., "Religion," XIX, 109.

Biblica a striking passage about the spiritual depression of the people. He says:

> In the religious life of the ancient world in its period of decline, perhaps the most characteristic feature was the ardour of its craving after the mysterious. . . . The questions whence life comes and whither it goes had to be answered at any cost; but men despaired of being able to reach such answers, each for himself by his own unaided thought. Resort was, accordingly, had to the mysteries—those secret cults, some of them of hoary antiquity, others as recent as Christianity itself, in which, with a lavish employment of symbolism, the candidate for initiation received the desired instruction from the duly consecrated priest (hierophant), and was provided with sacramental guarantees extending both to this life and to the next. . . .[2]

The "hoary cults" were not dying, although they were losing some of their influence. Was it not rather a case of becoming absorbed into a new religion?

In this welter of spiritual turmoil, who would be so bold as to say Galilee escaped the miasma of fear that was spreading all over the countries of the eastern Mediterranean? Dr. T. K. Cheyne tells us that "the Messianic hope burned more brightly in Galilee than anywhere else in Palestine."[3] How little we are told of this land that was to produce one who bore good tidings for the people! It is not until the coming of Herod that Galilee is suddenly brought to our notice as a place where great events were pending. And how strange it should be that the greatest event of all should take place in the "circle of the Gentiles."

The desire for salvation was not a strange one to Jew or Gentile. Dr. Morton Smith, in an essay published in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, "The Image of God," has some enlightening passages upon this theme, which are well worth our consideration. He traces the Hellenization of the Jews and says:

> . . . Most of the religious Jews in the Greco-Roman world . . . were primarily concerned about salvation, by which they meant spiritual peace in this life and the assurance of happiness hereafter. To describe this salvation they certainly used the language of the mystery religions. . . .[4]

This is to the point, and calls for a brief description of what they were and what rites and ceremonies were practiced by the initiated.

This subject has been somewhat neglected by the Bible critics, and is only occasionally touched upon by those theologians who have given us scholarly works upon the Gospels. There were some six or eight practiced in different parts of what was called the Hellenistic world, but some of them were reaching a period of desuetude before Pompey invaded Palestine. Here we shall mention only a few that were popular and claimed rich and poor adherents: these were the Orphic and the Mithraic mystery cults.

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[2] *Loc. cit.*, "Mystery," III, 3249.

[3] *Ency. Bibl.*, "Galilee," II, 1631.

[4] *Loc. cit.*, Vol. 40, No. 2, March 1958, p. 488.

Both might be called salvation cults, but before treating the material that is known of these two, it may be worth while taking a glance at some of the groups formed beyond the boundaries of what is called the Hellenistic world, which offered to individuals another way of life. The Essenes were one group, and undoubtedly the sect at Qumran was another. In Egypt we learn of two that are seldom mentioned in the literature of the Bible scholars: one was that strange union of individuals called the Gymnosophists. Dr. F. C. Conybeare tells us that Apollonius "visited Egypt, and went up the Nile in order to acquaint himself with those precursors of the monks of the Thebaid called in those days the Gymnosophists or naked philosophers."[5] We do not know much about the ceremonies and rites of these nudists, nor whether they could be called salvationists, but that they had cut themselves off from the world is another bit of evidence that shows a deep desire for a spiritual change.

The other group that is described so vividly by Philo was the Therapeutae, which I have referred to in another place. The importance lies in the fact that their existence indicates they were cults quite different from those in vogue in the north, which have been likened, in many respects, to the Christian creeds and ideals of the early days.

To what extent the three or four principal cults were indebted to one another for ideas has not been determined, but that certain forms of adaptation to meet local ritual requirements took place is shown in what we know about the cults of Isis and Orpheus. Sir Flinders Petrie has pointed this out in an illuminating passage:

> The worship of Isis was even wider spread than that of Sarapis. A papyrus names more than fifty well-known cities about the eastern Mediterranean where Isis was worshipped. She is identified with such different deities as Aphrodite and Athena, Hera and Helen; in short, she absorbs all goddesses as a monotheist mother-goddess. . . .[6]

This aspect of Syncretism cannot be overlooked in considering the cults that were purported to be harbingers of Christianity. Isis is perhaps the most ancient form of image worship.

The age of these cults—many of them in being long before Moses was found by Pharaoh's daughter—may be put back centuries, nay millennia, by the finds of archaeologists, and in all probability we shall have to revise many of the notions we have held about them. But what is so interesting is the many alterations and adaptations that took place as the rituals and ceremonies became known in regions far beyond the birthplace of the cult.

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[5] *Philostratus*, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, Eng. trans. by F. C. Conybeare, London, Wm. Heinemann, New York, Macmillan, 1912, 2 vols., vol. I, introd., p. xi.

[6] *Religious Life in Ancient Egypt*, London, Constable, 1924, p. 92. A scholarly work that has appeared in recent months is *The Cult of the Mother Goddess*, by E. O. James, London, Thames and Hudson, 1959.

When we reflect upon the history of these cults, as it is given to us by some recent Bible scholars, we cannot help wondering if Abraham and his people in their journeys from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean became acquainted with certain of the public ceremonies which were performed from time to time; and whether, in the migrations of people to the west, they stopped at many a shrine to worship the gods and goddesses of the cults of Mithra and Orpheus.

There is a description in *The History of Magic* by Kurt Seligmann that refers to public demonstrations of the Orphic cult, which might be taken as a practice that came down to the end of the first century B.C.:

> . . . The Orphic religion was already flourishing in Greece six hundred years before Christ. . . . Any religious ecstasy was believed to be divinely inspired. People among the crowd at the Orphic and Dionysiac festivals would, in a state of hysteria, utter prophetic words; in daily life, the flight of birds, the whispering of the trees, the sneeze of a neighbor were premonitions sent by the gods.[7]

Dr. Pfeiffer, in his *History of New Testament Times*, tells us that Orphism, named after the Thracian singer, taught the death and resurrection of Dionysius; further "the body is considered as the tomb of the soul; man is the dream of a shadow."

> . . . After death, the Orphic initiates . . . enjoyed an immortality. . . .
>
> We do not know whether Orphic ideas of future life influenced the descriptions of paradise and hell in Judaism before A.D. 200, but the so-called *Apocalypse of Peter* is unquestionably indebted to Orphism and introduced precise notions about heaven and hell into Christianity. . . . Orphism is important also for having stressed the sense of sin and guilt, and for showing a way which, through purifications and right living, led to eternal salvation.[8]

Such were some of the beliefs of the devotees of these cults hundreds of years before Paul was born. When we examine them, we are amazed at the similarity of tenets and the vigor of practice that was maintained into the early years of the Christian Era.

If the student desires a fuller knowledge of the religions practiced by the mystery cults before the Christian Era began, he cannot do better than read what Robert Pfeiffer has written about them, or turn to the brilliant article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on "Baptism," written by Dr. Hans Lietzmann of the University of Berlin. We learn from it:

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[7] *Op. cit.*, p. 91.

[8] London, A. & C. Black, 1949, p. 133.

> To the comparative study of religion the connections which unite this Pauline doctrine of baptism to the kindred notions of other religions could not remain hidden. It is not necessary to go back to the religious ideas of primitive peoples, among whom the entry into the clan or into a particular group is celebrated by ceremonies which express the death and new birth of the individual concerned. It is of much greater significance that we can trace numerous views of the kind in the civilization by which early Christianity was surrounded. These parallels had already struck the ancient Christian writers, been noted by them, and explained in various ways. We are particularly well informed about the ideas associated with the initiation rites of the initiates in the Isis Mysteries. . . .[9]

Dr. Pfeiffer sums it up in a concise statement:

> That one could easily mistake Judaism for an Oriental mystery may be seen from the characteristics that made these cults popular. . . . These cults undertook to restore to the soul its lost purity, either through ritual washings which should remove sin or through privations and suffering. Their priests became pastors, advising the members of their flock, individually, teaching them the abstentions and duties required to restore and retain their right relations with the deity. The holiness attained through such rites and ascetic practices was the condition of eternal bliss after death—a liberation from the slavery of the spirit to the body; this was the one ray of hope for the masses, whose wretched state on earth seemed beyond cure. Nay, the whole world seemed to have become so corrupted that its end was near. . . .[10]

After such a long experience of the religions of various cults, one would be inclined to think that man would be distrustful of the benefits of another one. For thousands of years he had tested them as they were practiced in different regions, and as the Old Testament shows, he changed from one to another frequently. But in what direction could he turn? Who offered to him the salvation he had sought in vain to find in the old cults? Plato and Zeno and other philosophers expounded doctrines that were far beyond his understanding. Perhaps the great trouble with him was (as it has always been) that he wanted it both ways: the best of this world with the best of the next. Moreover, how was it possible to preach renunciation of all worldliness to the crowds of proletarians and slaves in the great centers from Rome to Babylon, from Antioch to Memphis?

Yet, there was a cult that had a long life and, indeed, became the rival of the Christian religion. This was the cult of Mithra, the Persian god. One of the most enlightening descriptions of the history of the Mithraic cult is

[9] Fourteenth ed., III, 83.

[10] *Hist. of NT Times*, p. 193.

given by Robert Pfeiffer in his *History of New Testament Times*. The antiquity of this worship amazes us, for we have been accustomed to limit the time of its activities to the period from the first and second centuries of the old era down to the edicts that abolished it after the time of Constantine the Great. Pfeiffer tells us:

> Mithra is first known early in the second millennium B.C. as one of the gods of that group of ancient Indo-Europeans who called themselves Aryans: . . . these Aryans appeared in Western Asia in the sixteenth century B.C.[11]

We are astonished that such an ancient cult survived the many changes of shifting peoples and their forms of worship, and then spread through Europe and reached as far to the northwest as Britain. Pfeiffer continues:

> . . . The cult of Mithra became popular in the Roman Empire, and surpassed all other foreign cults in the abundance of widespread shrines and inscriptions until the triumph of Christianity. The spread of the cult was primarily due to the Roman army, stationed from Britain, the Rhine, and the Danube to the edge of Sahara in North Africa. War prisoners and slaves from Asia Minor and Western Asia likewise established far-flung centers of Mithra worship, as also merchants along the great routes. . . .[12]

The reason I have attempted this sketchy review of the mystery cults is that we should have a general idea of their tenets and practices so that we can appreciate the greatest change of all—the revelation of what man can do for himself—which was to come when the philosophy of the prophet of Nazareth was given to the meek and humble.

A new world was proclaimed. The cataclysm had to take place in the mind of man. He had to realize that he was the supreme master of his fate; that there was laid upon him the duty of living his life according to the law of God, and that law was eternal justice.

Man was responsible for his acts; to violate the laws of nature, with which he was in contact day after day, brought upon him severe penalties. All this he had to learn for himself. In seeking the kingdom of God and his justice, salvation was to be found in the here and now.

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE ARAMEANS, THEIR LANGUAGE, AND GALILEE

The relationship between the Hebrews and the Arameans at several stages of history has been seen throughout the Old Testament. Dr. A. Dupont-Sommer of the Sorbonne, in his invaluable work, *Les Araméens*, holds that the biblical tradition which recalls a blood kinship between Jacob and "the Aramean Laban" (Gen. 31:19) is a likely possibility.[1]

In an Akkadian cuneiform inscription, the name "Aram," describing a region, has now been traced back to the twenty-third century B.C. This discovery has laid at rest the theory that their history began in the fourteenth century, as was previously thought. Tradition tells us that the Arameans were nomads who migrated from the Syrian desert into settled regions. Dupont-Sommer points out that the Elohist source of Genesis places the original home of the Arameans in "the land of the people of the east" (Gen. 29:1), that is, the desert located to the east of Palestine.

The land occupied by the Arameans when they reached their highest degree of political importance in the eleventh and tenth centuries B.C. was a broad strip between Canaan and Mesopotamia, extending north to the Anatolian mountains. This was important as a road to the sea from the east, and as the gateway to Palestine and Egypt. Owing to its strategic location and being open to military vicissitudes, the land could not maintain a lasting political power, but was a route over which cultural movements could and did pass.

In the time of Tiglath-pileser I, the pressure of the Arameans held Assyria in check for a century and a half, after which there came another wave of conquest. Professor Sidney Smith, in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, describes this period as follows:

> . . . Tiglath-pileser I had already found it necessary to deal with a new phase in this great movement of peoples when he sacked the Aramaean settlements at the foot of Mt. Bishri. The invading tribes in his time began to evince a desire to settle in the rich lands of the middle Euphrates. During the period 1100-1000 B.C. it is probable that fresh hordes established their position in the most favourable lands they could conquer. For the most part these tribes were . . . Aramaean. . . . Aleppo and Damascus became Aramaean centres, and Phoenicia and Palestine were to experience the new pressure. . . .[2]

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[1] Paris, L'Orient Ancien Illustré, 1949, pp. 15-16. While this work is the most complete on the subject, the chapter in S. Moscati, *Ancient Semitic Civilizations*, New York, Putnam's, 1957, on "The Aramaeans," is also very useful for the broad outline. See also *supra*, p. 95.

[2] *Loc. cit.*, "The Foundation of the Assyrian Empire," Vol. III, ch. I, pp. 4-5.

During the period of the monarchy in Palestine we hear once more of the Arameans, who were on the borders north and east of Jordan. David, before he was made king, had many skirmishes with them (II Sam. 8:3-8). At that time they were in league with the Ammonites and were also established in Damascus, but David and his commander, Joab, were successful in overcoming them completely and leading away as slaves the inhabitants of the Ammonite cities.[3]

Thus, David was able to establish his rule over the Aramean tribes and to exact tribute from their city states. Under David's successor the tide was reversed, and Solomon lost the whole province of Aram. "The foundations were thus laid for the Aramaic kingdom of Damascus which was soon to develop with vigour and become, for a time, the strongest power in Palestine and Syria," Dr. Noth tells us.[4]

During the troublesome years after the division took place between north and south under Jeroboam and Rehoboam, the Arameans made alliances with Philistines and Phoenicians and became a formidable enemy of the State of Israel. The battleground seems to have been chiefly the land north and east of Jordan (I Kings 20:20, 22), although Mt. Ephraim and even the city of Samaria were besieged by them.

In the ninth century B.C. the Assyrian empire began to show its strength, and took up the offensive soon after. The Arameans, who were never politically strong, but were divided into local kingdoms, finally collapsed at the end of the eighth century B.C. before the westward drive of the Assyrians. Although their political power came to an end, the Aramaic language lived on and was widely used among Babylonians and Assyrians in diplomatic dealings. With the Persian conquest and the temporary union of the North Semitic world, between the sixth and fourth centuries B.C., Aramaic became the official language of the Persian Empire between Egypt and the Euphrates. The native languages were largely superseded. In fact, when the Hebrews returned from exile in 538 B.C., they knew and used Aramaic.

Professor Noth mentions the letter of a south Palestinian ruler addressed to the Egyptian Pharaoh "in the period of neo-Babylonian rule, and written in Aramaic, which was not the mother-tongue of either the writer or, still less, of the addressee. Aramaic written in letter script was used at this period for international correspondence."[5]

Further, Professor Noth is of the opinion that

> . . . The official use of Aramaic in the south-western parts of the Persian Empire had an important influence on the development of this language. It not only promoted the further advance of Aramaic as a spoken ver-

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[3] M. Noth, *Hist. of Israel*, pp. 164, 194.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 302*n*.

> nacular, but at the same time a particular form of language was developed in official correspondence, and a particular orthography . . . which was the basis of the further development of the Aramaic dialects.[6]

In the Book of Ezra we have several examples of Aramaic documents from the hand of Cyrus. With the advent of Hellenism, the Aramaic language lost ground. The Pentateuch was translated into Greek, and Aramaic was restricted mainly to the areas around Petra and Palmyra.

In the time of the Roman empire Aramaic recovered much of its prestige. It was the language of Jesus and the official language of the Syrian church. Much religious literature came to be written in that tongue and Near Eastern cults were diffused in Aramaic used by merchants, soldiers and slaves. Thus, east and west were brought together culturally through the medium of the Aramaic language.

We wonder, then, from what rare stock sprang the world's unique genius, who pierced the veils of creation and divined justice as the imperative law of the kingdom of God on earth. There was nothing in the character of Jesus that bore any resemblance to the strains conspicuous in the seed of Jesse. Can we imagine two more entirely different men than David and Jesus?

At no time did Jesus reveal the slightest Judean influence. He built no altars and offered no sacrifices. Indeed, he was far from being a ritualist. The meetings that he attended were gatherings of the poor, and most of them were held in the open air. He differed from all the other characters in the Old Testament in so many ways that we cannot resist the urge to discover his origin. Joseph Klausner quotes Wellhausen's well-known statement on Jesus:

> Despite the animus which Julius Wellhausen usually showed in treating of Pharisaic, Tannaitic and even Prophetic Judaism, he was responsible for the following bold estimate: "*Jesus was not a Christian; he was a Jew.*"[7]

Christian he could not have been, for he died before Paul saw his apparition on the road to Damascus. But what kind of a Jew was he? We know from many sources that the Jews in the "circle of the Gentiles" were despised not only by the Judean authorities of throne and temple, but by some of the prophets. Consider Hosea's scathing words:

> Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.
>
> By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

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[6] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

[7] Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. by Herbert Danby, New York, Macmillan, 1929, p. 363.

> Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish. . . .(4:1-3).

Galilee is rather like a poor relation, treated with slight consideration by many of the Bible scholars, and indeed by modern historians.[8] The name is mentioned several times in the early Books of the Old Testament, usually with the connotation that the district was inhabited by heathen (Joshua 20:7; II Kings 15:29 etc.). In Isaiah (9:1) we find the name explained as follows:

> . . . At the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

But who were the "nations" or the "Gentiles" (as the text is rendered in the Douay version)? The name Galilee, alone, means "circle" or "district," and in Isaiah we have the first addition of the phrase "of the nations." Why specifically it was given this title is not stated. Still, we can infer from it that the district was dominated by people who were not acknowledged Jews. I think there is evidence in Isaiah, which shows that the northern parts of the kingdom had fallen into disarray by the eighth century and that the early settlers had gone a-whoring after strange gods. Now who were these gods?

Some of the leading scholars have much to say about the spread of the cults of the Gentiles in the period dealt with by Isaiah. Indeed, the references to this state of affairs by nearly all the minor prophets indicate the ritual unrest that, at any rate, affected Samaria and the lands to the north. Micah denounces the Canaanite idols of Samaria in the following words:

> And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate . . . (1:7).

I have not found a work published in the last fifty years by the scholars that deals comprehensively with Galilee, but occasionally in separate works there are references to important persons and events. However, they are discouragingly brief. In the *Cambridge Ancient History* there is an illuminating chapter entitled "The Jews," by E. R. Bevan, who says:

> . . . The brief reign of Aristobulus was chiefly memorable for an expansion of the Jewish State to the north—the conquest of Galilee, inhabited in part by a tribe of warlike hillmen, Ituraeans. According to the precedent set by Hyrcanus in Idumaea, the conquered heathen were

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[8] A penetrating inquiry into the conditions in Galilee and neighborhood will be found in Dr. Frederick C. Grant's excellent work, *The Economic Background of the Gospels*, London, Oxford University Press, 1926.

> compelled to accept circumcision and become Jews. The Galileans of the time of Jesus Christ must have had largely heathen ancestors.[9]

Dr. Bevan is here referring to a state of affairs which existed forty years before Pompey came upon the scene. We should like to know more specifically who the heathen ancestors were. As I have pointed out previously, two or three times, there is a wide difference of opinion among the critics concerning the native people of Syria and Galilee. Some of them have suggested that there were non-Semitic strains from the north even as early as the first Hittite invasion to the south, which settled in this region. I am not at all surprised at the conflict of opinion concerning these people, because Galilee seems to have been a line of demarcation between Judean influence, on the one hand, and the northern peoples of different religions. Her territory must have been a refuge for the remnants of invading armies from Lebanon and also from the countries east of Jordan.

Was Galilee the first melting pot of the world? How many different tongues were spoken in her valleys and along the shores of the lake? We may be sure that the people of Phoenicia not only traded but settled in her principal cities: merchants of small wares and light household commodities that were carried on the vendor's back or upon an ass. To what extent parts of her territory were taken by Arameans is not mentioned. Still, these people were undoubtedly at times dominant in this area. And it is to them that we owe the language which survived all other tongues that were spoken by the people before the time of Jesus.

The old idea that prevailed in the days of our grandfathers, that the ancient world was contained in an area bounded by the Nile and Euphrates, seems to us now rather childish. We are not told in Genesis how far north that world extended, although the Hittites are referred to several times. Perhaps it is advisable for us to look further afield, for peoples who for one reason or another entered Galilee.

From what we know now of the Minoans (or Cretans) as a seafaring people, it is reasonable to assume that they visited Palestine from Sidon and Tyre as far south as Jerusalem and Gaza.[10] Furthermore, the name of the river that runs to the Lake of Galilee and then south to the Dead Sea is now traced to a reference in the *Odyssey*. In a work written by D. S. Merejkowski, called *Jesus the Unknown*, we gather some important information about the Jordan:

> The very name "Jordan" was brought to Palestine from Crete, where the tribe of Chidones, as we learn from Homer, "lived near the bright waters of Jardonos."[11]

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[9] *Loc. cit.*, Vol. IX, ch. IX, p. 398.

[10] For an up-to-date and most interesting presentation, see Sir Leonard Woolley, *A Forgotten Kingdom*, London, Max Parrish, 1959.

[11] New York, Scribner, 1934, p. 285; *Odyssey*, II, 292.

Thus, we are reasonably certain that the Sidonians and the Cretans were in close touch with each other. This is not strange, because at a very early date we have the record of long voyages undertaken by the Egyptians to Hittite territory. Who can doubt the inference that may be drawn from this: that Galilee must have shared advantages with the Sidonians from the influx of Cretan traders. It is not unreasonable to imagine these people making their way across Galilee to the lake and to Jordan.

Sir Arthur Evans' work in Crete was undertaken some sixty years ago.[12] With a few exceptions I have yet to find in the books of renowned Bible scholars an appreciative reference to his discoveries which, to my mind, are so important in the quest of establishing the origin of the Galilean Gentiles.

Galilee being the northern junction of the great trade routes must, in times of peace, have borne the signs of a cosmopolitan center. Perhaps more different tongues were spoken there than in any other part of the east. The great cities of the south were few in number, and to some extent, with the exception of Jerusalem, they were stopping places on the way to the Nile.

Dr. Max Schoen, in his commendable work called *The Man Jesus Was*, sums up the findings of the learned experts in terse sentences:

> . . . Galilee was a crossroads of the world, with great highways passing through in all directions from the Levant to Damascus and the East, from Jerusalem to Antioch, and from the Nile to the Euphrates. The questionable Jewish origin of the Galileans, arising from their exposure on all sides to heathen influences, was intensified by the conditions within Galilee itself. . . .[13]

The center of the region, as we have stated before, was a spur of high hills running north and south from the Lebanon range. The remoteness of Nazareth is well described by Dr. Schoen, and the peculiar difference in religious observances and social affairs which distinguished it from Judea is emphasized:

> The Galileans similarly departed from the Judeans in their customs regarding marriage and funeral rites, and in their manner of celebrating the Passover and observing the Day of Atonement. . . .
>
> The most serious count against the Galileans in the eyes of Jerusalem was the fact that they were transgressors of the Torah because of the very nature of their occupations. The saying of Sirach that "the wisdom of a learned man comes by opportunity of leisure" and therefore he that "holds the plow, glories in the goad, drives oxen and is occupied in their labors, and whose talk is of bullocks, cannot get wisdom" was a commonplace with the Rabbis (Ecclus. 38:24-39). The great Hillel, a contemporary of Jesus, had declared that the Am-ha-arets, "the man of the land," the common person, could not be pious. All the Galileans

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[12] *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*, London, Macmillan, 1921.

[13] New York, Knopf, 1950, p. 141.

> belonged to this class. They were all common folk who made their living as farmers and artisans. . . .[14]

What a mixture of peoples there must have been in all the area of Palestine after the wars between the kingdoms of the north and of the south! Perhaps Galilee, very early after the settlement, was so much a land of the Gentiles that the Judeans held her in no respect. Some of the epithets thrown at her are recorded in John: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth" (John 1:46)? "Shall Christ (Messiah) come out of Galilee" (John 7:41)? "Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" (John 7:52), and from Matthew 4:16: "The people which sat in darkness . . . in the region and shadow of death."

Yet, Dr. Chester McCown presents another point of view:

> . . . It would be too much to claim that it was the birthplace of Judaism, but it was certainly its *alma mater*. No prophet arose in Galilee. But, if "normative Judaism" was not born in Galilee, it grew to maturity there. . . .[15]

No other part of the ancient world before the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions of the eight and seventh centuries B.C. has such a record for mixed marriages as Galilee. The Books of the Old Testament deal with this problem over and over again. It was, indeed, one of the dominant complaints of the Hebrew prophets against their disobedient people. There is, however, one important feature in this matter that has not been stressed by any of the authors I have read: the men of Israel must have had little opportunity of transgressing the law, for we may think it unlikely that foreign women entered the Promised Land in numbers. Therefore, the burden of the complaint must be placed upon the shoulders of the weaker sex.

Soldiers, sailors, and traders of foreign nations would find hordes of women who were widows and orphans, for the incessant wars which raged from the time of Joshua until the end of David's reign must have had a distressing effect upon the women of the tribes. There must have been at least ten different nations either warring or trading in and about Galilee before and after Issachar settled there. And how many tongues were spoken! The land must have been a field of babble, and that is why there is no document that can be associated in any way with the people of Galilee mentioned in the Old Testament.

Stranded soldiers, remnants of foreign armies, are made welcome by native women where males are scarce. Galilee must have been at the very core of the mixed marriage problem. Perhaps this is the reason why we learn so little from the Old Testament of what became of the tribe of Issachar. That few Hebrews were left at the time of the Maccabean uprising is made plain in I Maccabees, when the few Jews in Galilee sent word to Judas to come to their assistance, and he sent Simon there to rescue them (5:17, 20-21).

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[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 142-4.

[15] *The Ladder of Progress in Palestine*, New York and London, Harper, 1943, p. 255.

The scholars are puzzled that Nazareth is not mentioned in the Books of the Old Testament. There are other places in southern Galilee not referred to: Nain is not mentioned nor is Cana. More important still, is Bethlehem, midway between Nazareth and Mount Carmel. These were lowly villages and in all probability, nothing occurred there to bring them to the notice of the hearsay historians of the time.

The descriptions of Nazareth we find in the books of the scholars are those of wayside hamlets where peasants cultivate the soil. Wars may be fought in the cities round about them and never affect their tenure of existence. Who has the courage to attempt to take a straight line through the confusions of ideas, expounded by different scholars, about the religious conditions that prevailed in Galilee after the invasion of Alexander and the Maccabean revolt? For about 150 years after Alexander all the country north of Samaria was in a turmoil of unrest. To what extent the aftermath of these wars affected the people in the villages is not known. The experts have little to say about this important part of the wars.

There can be little doubt about the voluntary dispersion of Hebrews after the invasion of Alexander. Those who sought a place of refuge even under the foreign powers where they could perform their ritual duties and live with some sense of security took leave of the Promised Land. We know that they went to Egypt and were to be found as far west as Rome. Some, perhaps, reached Carthage and the cities of the Aegean, in their search for a place of safety. For the whole of Palestine had been scourged by wars. In all this we see the disintegration of the original purpose of the occupation of the Promised Land, and we are reminded of the threat of Yahweh to scatter the children of Abraham all over the earth.

PART II

THE NEW TESTAMENT

CHAPTER I

SOME NEW TESTAMENT PROBLEMS

When the earnest student has read the Books of the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi, including Daniel, he may wonder how the purport of it affects him as an individual. He may not realize at once that these books have nothing whatever to do with the Christian religion, and he may ask himself of what use they are to him as a citizen of a modern political power. He is forced to the conclusion that the history that is unfolded is Jewish in all its aspects. The compilers and adapters, even long before the work upon the Septuagint was undertaken, had not the slightest notion that their work would be of any interest to Christians. It was primarily for the Children of Israel.

The intricacies that so often confused us in reading the Books of the Old Testament were as nothing compared to those we shall have to consider when we begin to study the Gospels. It is not readily understood by the student in the first stages of this work that the New Testament, as it is called, is totally different from the Old. There is a double purpose, which becomes clear to the deep-thinking student in the first book of the Gospels, beginning with the pedigree of Jesus. Moreover, he will soon begin to realize that there are two entirely different figures presented to him: one is a human being called Jesus, who was born in Nazareth. The other is a mystical figure called Christ, who was presented after the crucifixion of the man of flesh and blood. These differences unfortunately do not become apparent to the Bible student until he departs from the strict course of his studies. When he probes what the critics of the Gospels have to say about the time when the stories were circulated and the purpose for which they were intended, he becomes aware of the twofold idea.

However, these are only a few of the intricate problems that confront the earnest student. There are so many that today we can count scores of works by eminent scholars, which completely refute the conceptions of Gospel history which were common sixty years ago. Later on I shall deal with many of the critics whose works have initiated a complete change of view as to the old scriptural interpretations, which were dominant in all circles that relied upon theological conjectures.

The one term that was held sacrosanct for centuries was "faith." No matter how often in the Gospels and the Epistles this term was given different renderings, no matter how often disciples stated clearly that faith without works was futile, it prevailed as a strong fortress against any assault of reason upon it.

Suppose that we take the Gospels as they appear in the New Testament, and submit them to serious inquiry as to their authorship and the time when they were circulated, so that we may be prepared for the astonishing changes, which have taken place in recent years, and which have caused much mind searching among the theologians themselves. If it be admissible to begin with two entirely different figures presented in the Gospels and, for the purpose of analysis, to dissociate the one from the other—Jesus from Christ, and Christ from Jesus—we shall enter upon our task clear of the hindrances that had to be surmounted by the critics of two generations ago.

It is firmly agreed today that Jesus was a Galilean and spoke the language of the people—Aramaic. No one succeeds in proving that he spoke Greek. Perhaps we might modify this by saying (as one or two of the Jewish critics suggest) that it was "possible." But I find that Klausner and others in their works do not give us the slightest reason for thinking that a carpenter of Nazareth should speak that language. What use would he have for it? In what tongue, then, were the sayings and actions of Jesus recorded? Could it be in any other but the one he spoke and the one that was common to the people whom he addressed? Klausner himself states quite firmly that, when the Law (Torah) was read in the synagogue of Galilee, the priest had to translate it into the tongue of the people, Aramaic. Although the priest read Torah in Hebrew, it is suggested by some of the Jewish scholars that there was an Aramaic version of the Law. Perhaps it was not permitted for a priest to read it in any other language than Hebrew. However that might be, there is agreement that the people of Galilee spoke Aramaic, and that was the language Jesus used when he started upon his mission and spoke to the people.

If this be a correct or, let us say, approximately correct notion of the position, so far as the people and their speech can be determined, we may then ask who wrote the first version of the sayings and actions of Jesus? Until recently nearly all the critics agreed that the original of the first two Gospels was an Aramaic one. How could it have been otherwise? Who was there among the crowds that went to be baptized by John and, afterwards, flocked to hear Jesus when he began his mission, that could readily have translated his Aramaic speeches or sermons into Greek? We are at a loss to imagine such a thing possible even in a Galilean Jerome. And from the Gospels there is not the slightest hint that such an accomplished native linguist existed in the country. Nevertheless, the Gospel original was of use only to the people who spoke the language of that section of Israel and, although it was laid down that the disciples should give the glad tidings to the lost sheep of Israel, it was found after Jesus' death, that if the Gentiles were to be converted to the new faith [of Paul], it was essential to translate the original Aramaic into Greek. Here, again, we come upon a problem that has mystified many. Some years ago the question was asked: "Why Greek?" It is here that we have to go outside and beyond anything we learn in the four Gospels, for information upon this matter.

We need not remind the earnest Bible student that, although the disciples may now and then have quoted from the prophets, they were not historians. As for the new information we have received from learned scholars during the past two generations, they could not have known what the Hellenistic influence had amounted to in the cities of the lands to the north of them. How could poor natives of the "circle of the Gentiles" know the tongues that were spoken in the marts of Antioch, Ephesus, Tarsus and other cities that were centers of the old mystery cults?

Here the language problem confronts us again, for we cannot accept the first two Gospels, as they are set out in the New Testament, as direct Greek translations from the Aramaic. It would be easy to count a dozen or more passages in both the Gospels that could not possibly have been recorded in the original Aramaic. These alien ideas that are taken from the mystery cults could never have been current in the speech of the Galileans at the time Jesus lived. They are undoubtedly notions that were not thought of by the disciples until after Paul was converted on the road to Damascus. It is not necessary to quote any of these passages, for the Gospel critics have commented at length upon them. It is well to keep this in mind if, on the one hand, we are to deal separately with Jesus of Nazareth, the man of flesh and blood and, on the other, the mystical Christ that was not known to the disciples until long after the crucifixion of their leader.

These are not the only problems that await solution by the Gospel experts. In many works published in recent years authors have made such inquiries as: Why is the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew and not in Mark? Why is the Virgin birth not recorded by Mark? There are other omissions in one or the other, and additions in the one and not in the other. I have long held the idea that neither of the first two Gospels was a direct translation from the first Greek one. I hold with one of the critics that the first two Gospels were transcripts adapted to the use of the particular community that was to be instructed. My reason for putting this suggestion forward is that the Sermon on the Mount was never meant to be given to groups in the city. The public authorities would have considered it seditious in its character, and as inciting slaves and the poor to rebel against restraints.

Mark is quite different in its appeal. There is not much in it that would offend the political power. If both were taken from one source, the editing adapters must have been conscious of these considerations, for the difference in tone and purpose of the two is significant, chapter after chapter. When this work was completed we cannot tell. The dates that have been given for the first two Gospels have been so varied that I am loath to give my humble opinion. Still, the latest works consulted suggest dates between A.D. 65 and 67 for Mark and between A.D. 75 and 80 (or 80 and 100) for Matthew.

The student should not be misled by the term "church" as it is used in Acts. It is stretching this term to an inordinate degree to call a small group of people who had accepted the good tidings a "church." Where these meetings were held is not stated. They probably assembled in the house of a convert, for they would find no place in the synagogues, and it is not to be thought that any enclosure of a shrine of Isis or Orpheus would be shelter for them. Still, we do know that small groups today assemble in strange places.

How many of the disciples were engaged in the missions that extended away north and west from Syria is hard to tell. Peter seems to have remained in Judea for many years after the crucifixion. He and James, the brother of Jesus, confined their teaching and preaching to Jerusalem and the suburbs (Acts 11:19-24).

One of the few direct statements to be found in Acts of the movements of the people concerned in the new gospel is as follows:

> Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.
>
> And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. . . .
>
> Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch (Acts 11:19-20, 22).

Who were these people? Nowhere do we find the name of a disciple given as a missioner who went beyond the confines of Judea. That movement took place at the time of the persecution when Stephen was stoned. This must be clearly understood because Paul had not yet been converted, and the Greek term for a messiah had not been added to the name of Jesus. The author of Acts indicates some uncertainty in the use of the terms: "Jesus" and "Christ." This is most noticeable, for there are over forty references to Jesus by name, which stand without the addition of the Greek term "Christ."

The description of the empty tomb and the resurrection differs in each of the four Gospels. In the first three the mother of Jesus is not mentioned as being present. It is in John we learn that she was with the women when they went to the open tomb. I do not know a critic who has had much to tell us bout the congregation of women who assembled in Jerusalem at the time of the trial of Jesus and the crucifixion. We read that they followed him from Galilee, but they are not mentioned as having been in his company until the last day of his life. May we then decide that nearly all the statements in the first three Gospels about the last three days in Jerusalem came from women? We do know that not one of the eleven, after the death of Iscariot, was present when he died. The last we heard of Peter was in the house of the high priest and elders. But after that episode he disappears from the story.

It is a curious literary intrusion in the account to make the women responsible for the report of what had taken place. It seems to be an expedient on the part of the adapters of the Gospels. The only two men present who might have reported were Joseph of Arimathea and Simon of Cyrene. Why do they appear suddenly upon the scene, to make an exit almost as quickly as their entrance?

These are only a few of the peculiar problems that arise in the Gospels concerning the last week in Jerusalem. They may appear to some readers to be of no great moment. Still, when we consider the authorship of Matthew and Mark, we are obliged to search for the reporters of the scenes of the last days and we wonder if they were in the original Aramaic version.

One of the difficulties of trying to make sense of these statements is to account for the people who had been converted by the disciples, and to ascertain what glad tidings were taken to cities beyond the borders of Palestine. Were the converts in social condition not unlike Stephen and Philip, who at first became servitors at the table of the disciples? That they were at the same time pupils of the disciples is reasonable, and also that they were Jews who thoroughly understood the Law, which Jesus said he had not come to destroy. One reason why the critics have many various views upon this movement of unnamed missioners to the north may be attributed to the confused notions of the doctrine of the mission. It could not have been Christian in any sense that is Pauline. And it could not possibly have been that of Jesus, for it would be stretching the imagination almost to breaking point to harbor the fancy that the philosophy of Jesus could be openly preached in the towns under political rule.

Those critics who have cited the philosophy of Zeno as an example of a revolutionary doctrine tolerated by the political authorities should consider the wide difference between what took place on the Stoa at Athens and the preaching of downright anarchism in the foreign-ruled cities of Syria and the north. How could the precepts in the Sermon on the Mount be part of the doctrine carried by the unnamed missioners to Antioch, Cyprus and Phenice? In reading the Gospels we have already discovered that Peter and his fellows did not understand Jesus. The contradictions that abound are many, and it is not easy to pick a few of the important ones in the attempt to solve this mysterious movement of missioners to the north at the time of the persecution of Stephen.

No matter how we argue these debatable points, the idea remains that the news of a new gospel reached Antioch and was accepted by the poor and needy so heartily that a group was formed, which became the nucleus of the most astounding spiritual revolution to spread over Europe in all directions. However, there will be no end to this debate. Critic after critic has dealt with it and expressed himself without reaching final decision. We may be sure that the critics of the next generation will not add much to what is already known.

On this point the differences of opinion lead us in many directions. Klausner suggests that the group in Damascus might have been a Zadokite one. Other critics venture to comment they were Hellenistic Jews ready to welcome news of the change that was coming to the world.

The only definite statement we find of a movement before Barnabas was sent to the north is the one that refers to Philip's mission in Samaria (Acts 8:5), which was forbidden ground (Matt. 10:5). If he went there (and there is some doubt about that), he left Jerusalem in all probability shortly after the first persecution, when Stephen was stoned. Also in Acts we learn that Peter and John were sent into Samaria (Acts 8:14), but Klausner seems to be confident that Peter and other disciples were in and about Jerusalem for something like fourteen years after the crucifixion. Would it not be giving a notion of success to the mission of Philip to Samaria by conceding more than ten years to the length of his work there? These are only a few of the unsupported statements that make it difficult to account for what took place before Paul's conversion.

How many different groups holding opposing ideas were in Jerusalem in the two or three years after the death of Jesus? Some of the Gospel stories deal with two, others with three. There might have been four. Those that are dealt with in the books upon the Gospels and Acts, that have been published in recent years are as follows: (1) the Sadducees, firm traditionalists, opposed to any innovation of the religious and ethical laws laid down in Torah; (2) the high priests and the elders, who were the conservatives of the priestly code and strongly averse to any change being made in it; (3) a new faction headed by Stephen, which desired a reform of the Priestly Code. These are the chief sections of diverse opinion the scholars present to us. (4) The fourth is of no less importance than the other three. It was composed of the group that might be designated as Hellenistic Jews. The members of this group were perhaps those who at the time of the persecution went north to the cities of Syria and Cyprus. It might be argued that they were the better educated, more affluent of the strangers who had been drawn to Jerusalem by the stories of the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus. If they were people of the mystery cults looking for a cataclysmic change, they would seek knowledge of what really had taken place. What other reason would draw them to Jerusalem?

Yet, this movement of such people cannot be rejected as mere legend, because we are informed from several different sources that both the urban world and the peasant world were expecting a complete change to take place. We should think well of this for it raises the question of how the information reached them. We have no hint anywhere that they were in touch with the disciples, and the disciples knew only what Mary Magdalene and the other women could tell them of the resurrection. Moreover, the words "He is risen" would awake in the mind of every devotee of the old cults spiritual longings that had been dormant for generations. Nearly all the expert historians, from the time of Edward Gibbon down to Jacob Burckhardt, agree about the longing felt by those of the mystery cults for one to come, through whom salvation would be a fulfillment and not merely a promise.

However, no matter what decision is reached about the probability of this fourth group carrying the first news of the resurrection to the cities of the north, we know of no other way to account for the quick spread of the news of the resurrection and the empty tomb reaching places so far removed from Jerusalem as Antioch and Cyprus.

Now that we have gained an appreciation of the difficulties encountered in establishing a coherent story of what took place, we shall give the student of the Gospels and Acts the views of some of the learned critics who have dealt with this period. In connection with the story of Stephen, let us consult the Abbé Loisy. In his work, *The Origins of the New Testament*, we find:

> . . . The story of Philip's apostolic exploits in Samaria is awkwardly lodged in that of the persecution, the frame of which is wholly fictitious. The only believers who had to flee from Jerusalem were the chief members of the *Greek-speaking* group. In representing the persecution as indiscriminate and as including both groups, Hebrew and Hellenist, the writer would hide the division which existed between them and avoid giving the hellenists the credit, which was really theirs, of carrying the Gospel beyond Judea. By this falsification he becomes involved in all sorts of contradiction. . . . He represents the entire body of believers, Hebrew and Greek, taking to flight and dispersed "except the apostles" (8:1). . . .[1]

I am not satisfied with this opinion. Indeed, my view of the different groups, as given above, is not considered by Loisy. Still, it is hard to tell what the disciples of Jesus (*not apostles*) had to do with this movement. There is no suggestion in Acts that they authorized it or even suggested it. It seems to have taken place without their knowledge.

An English theologian, Dr. E. W. Barnes, who was Bishop of Birmingham, tells us:

> . . . Stephen was spokesman of the Hellenistic Jews and consequently aroused memories of the bitter struggles against Antiochus Epiphanes. He must have seemed to be leader of a movement, not within, but against Judaism. After his death, those who sympathized with him left Jerusalem; and the mission to the gentiles had henceforth the non-Jewish cities of Damascus and Antioch as its centres.[2]

[1] Trans. by Dr. L. P. Jacks, London, Allen and Unwin, 1950, p. 175.

[2] *The Rise of Christianity*, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1947, pp. 37-8.

Dr. Barnes throws some sidelights upon the problems that have not yet been solved about the groups in Jerusalem at the time of the stoning of Stephen. It is curious that he should imagine that there were Christians there at that time. Surely that would be antedating the discovery that nearly all the critics are agreed upon: that the first Christians were found at Antioch much later. Nevertheless, the Christians who were at Antioch might have been the Hellenistic Jews who left Jerusalem at the time of the persecution. That seems to be reasonable.

We shall conclude this preliminary survey of some of the many peculiar problems that confront us when we make a deep study of the Gospels and Acts. To my mind the man who has gone more deeply into these matters than any of the other Gospel critics is Rudolf Bultmann, the author of *Theology of the New Testament*. He is Professor of New Testament at the University of Marburg, and the translations of his works have had a wide circulation.

A revolution in thought has taken place in the past few years concerning the beginnings of the Christian Church. And if we are to commence our studies with a knowledge of the different opinions of the Gospel critics, we should turn to Bultmann's work to fortify ourselves against the questionable notions that prevailed about the early years of Christianity, as expressed by former writers. The point from which we should start is the one that is selected by Bultmann. He tells us:

> . . . Christian faith did not exist until there was a Christian kerygma; i.e., a kerygma proclaiming Jesus Christ—specifically Jesus Christ the Crucified and Risen One—to be God's eschatological act of salvation. He was first so proclaimed in the kerygma of the earliest Church, not in the message of the historical Jesus. . . . Thus, theological thinking—the theology of the New Testament—begins with the *kerygma* of the earliest Church and not before [170 A.D.]. . . .[3]

This statement should force the student to reconsider the declarations of many of the writers upon the Gospels and Acts. It is startling and may shock some of our conservative theologians. However, it is one that cannot be lightly put aside, for it is the mature opinion of one of the most profound theologians who has written upon the Gospels and Acts in our time.

The method I wish to employ in making an analysis of the quite different accounts in the four Gospels is to differentiate between those that can be accepted as historical events and those that are Pauline and of a mystical character. For a proper understanding, the two ideas must be treated separately. During the lifetime of the prophet of Nazareth, no one in Galilee or Judea thought of a Christ (the Greek translation of the word messiah). For my purposes, then, the Gospels of Luke and John have no historical significance, save in one or two passages, which I shall discuss later.

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[3] *Op. cit.*, trans. by Kendrick Grobel, London, SCM Press, 1952, I, 3.

Christianity was a religious movement of rapid spread and of slow growth. It had to be adapted to those who were of the mystery cults. At first, they were, in the main, slaves and the downtrodden in the cities of the north, beyond Galilee. And most of the Gospel critics inform us that the message of the teachers had to be adapted to the understanding of potential converts. Here lies the most difficult problem for the Gospel student and, to some extent, accounts for the strange conflict of ideas set forth in the four Gospels. It will be my task to attempt to present the persons and events of the time of Jesus in the manner of the Gospel critics of the various schools, and try to differentiate between what is historic and what is Pauline.

CHAPTER II

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

The object of the evangelist who wrote the Gospel of Matthew, as we read it today, is betrayed in the first chapter. The genealogy is set out for one purpose only, namely, to give to Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus, the pedigree of the royal house of Jesse and David. The narrator's governing impulse seems to be to correlate the birth of Jesus with the prophecies of the Old Testament. This should be clear because the method is emphasized several times in this Gospel. The editor had to fulfill fifteen prophecies of Isaiah.

As the story unfolds in Matthew, there is no implication whatever that the Jews desired a Christ, in the Pauline sense of the term. The engaging work that was done by the compilers was an endeavor to fulfill the promise of a political messiah who would restore the glories of Israel. But it should be clearly understood that we are reading about the aims of Jews. The Christians of the period when the Gospel of Matthew was written desired something quite different.

Opinion about the date of the compilation of the Gospels, which many have decided was in Greek (some say from an Aramaic source), varies between A.D. 64 for Mark and 85 for Matthew. This wide difference of periods is shown by authors of two different schools of thought. Guignebert says:

> . . . We shall not be far wrong if we assign the origin of our Mark to about A.D. 75, of our Matthew to about 85 to 90, and of our Luke to between 100 and 110, nor would it be surprising if, in the future, even later dates should be assigned to them.[1]

Daniel-Rops states:

> It may be remarked, however, that more recent criticism has tended to decrease the gap between the lifetime of Christ and the setting down of the Gospels. Whereas in 1835 David Strauss put the latter at 150 A.D. "at the earliest," Renan in 1877 thought that St. Matthew was probably written in 84, St. Mark about 76 and St. Luke about 94. In 1911 the great Protestant theologian Harnack ascribed St. Matthew to about A.D. 70, St. Mark about 65 and St. Luke about 67, and added that the common source, one of those "apostolic mementos" which have been mentioned, was probably in existence about A.D. 50 or even earlier. Mgr. Ricciotti in his book published in 1941 makes the following suggestions, that the original Aramaic of St. Mark was set down about 50-55, the Greek text coming much later; St. Mark's Gospel dates from the years between 55 and 72 when the Evangelist was in Rome with

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[1] *Jesus*, trans by S. H. Hooke, New York, University Books, 1956, p. 31.

> St. Peter. . . . If we oppose to these dates those of Guignebert, who gives 75 for St. Mark, 85-90 for St. Matthew and 100-110 for St. Luke, we have the outside and inside limits of the period debated. . . .[2]

In reading the story of the birth of Jesus in this Gospel, as it moves on without palpable contradiction, we are apt to forget the years that intervened between the death of Jesus and the time when it was written in Greek. Notwithstanding the agreement of some of the scholars that the original was in Aramaic, we cannot help but wonder at the memories of the evangelist. For when we realize the fearful years of tribulation through which Judea passed before the fall of Jerusalem, we might well think the apostles followed the system of the Egyptian priests who told Herodotus that they kept a record of everything. And this is to say nothing of the bitter differences and altercations that took place between Paul and those who had been associated with Jesus from the beginning of his mission.

Before we leave, for the time being, the story of the birth, and how it was accepted that Joseph was the legal father, we might set down here what two of the experts have to say about it. There was a custom which, in nearly all things, gave priority to the male. An article by Baron Hermann von Soden in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, tells us:

> . . . All that was postulated was descent from Zerubbabel, David and Abraham. The mode of supplying the intervening links was a matter of indifference. . . . For the Messiah was in any case *de jure* David's son—i.e., heir and legitimate successor.[3]

This information is amplified by the Reverend B. T. D. Smith, in an article in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, who describes how and why Joseph was recognized as the father of Jesus. He says:

> The Genealogy (1:1-17) shows the Davidic descent of the Messiah through Joseph, whose legal heir He became when Joseph recognized Mary as his wife; the story of the Virgin Birth (1:18-25) proves him David's Lord as well as son. . . .[4]

The Gospel of Mark may be described as a record of actions which predominate in his story. But that of Matthew differs widely from it in many respects, and may be referred to as the book of sayings. Whether Mark and Matthew both used an Aramaic version is a difficult matter to decide. We also wonder why the Second Gospel, in the order of the New Testament, is almost bare of the sayings. Were they purposely deleted? If the statement to Papias (middle of the second century) is to be accepted, that Peter told the story of Jesus to Mark in Rome, he must have told him about the sayings, for they are of far greater importance than the actions.

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[2] *Jesus in His Time*, trans. by R. W. Millar, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955, p. 39.

[3] *Loc. cit.*, "Genealogies of Jesus," II, 1668.

[4] *Loc. cit.*, "Matthew," XV, 96.

It may be urged that Peter thought what Jesus did was more important than what he said. Yet, it is strange that many of the sayings are closely linked to the actions. Several of the scholars reject the story of Peter being in Rome. Why and how an illiterate fisherman, who did not understand the worth of the sayings of Jesus and who was rebuked several times for his lack of understanding, should take a journey to Rome about the time that Paul was there defeats the imagination of a thoroughgoing research student. Loisy and others put it aside as a mere legend.

How were these sayings recorded? Most of them read as if they were taken down at the time they were spoken. They have all the marks of having been heard by a recorder. However, it may be difficult for men of today, interested in this matter, to recognize the exceeding accuracy which runs through them all, for surely it must be admitted by those who have gone deeply into the problem that they are part and parcel of one consistent philosophy.[5] In connection with much recorded in the Gospels, we find in the critics an unwarranted leaning to clothe them with the Christian idea that prevailed long after the death of Jesus.

Who, then, took down an account of the gems of wisdom we find in Matthew? Who could be interested in this work? Certainly none of the disciples, for with the exception of Peter, not one of the other ten has been named for his literacy. Mark was not present when these words were spoken. The best that can be said of him is that he was an amanuensis of Peter, and according to Papias, the story he received from the disciple was given after the death of Jesus.

It is necessary to probe this problem deeply because there lies behind it the question of the original document that served the compilers of Mark and Matthew and Luke. To label this record as Quelle (source) is not sufficient. Who wrote the source, and in what tongue? For a succinct statement of this problem, I might refer the reader to the article entitled "Gospel," in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, written by Dr. A. E. J. Rawlinson, Bishop of Derby, former university lecturer in Biblical Studies, Oxford.[6] He gives us some information about the source that is not generally mentioned.

To suggest that the original had been in either Hebrew or Greek is not reasonable, for where would one be found in that day to translate quickly Aramaic into Greek? The only one of the disciples present when Jesus spoke these words, who could speak a little Greek, was Matthew. But no one has suggested that he was a fluent linguist. He might have had a few words that were necessary to him in his work as a toll gatherer. Perhaps Peter, in his business as a seller of fish in Capernaum, might have had a few words of Greek. But their ability to use that tongue would be so limited that it might be said it was merely "pidgin" Greek.

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[5] Dr. Goodspeed, in his recent work, *Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist*, provides us with some novel information concerning the use of shorthand in Greece and Rome about the time Jesus lived. He says: "While we cannot say that Matthew used it in taking down Jesus' utterances, it had been employed a hundred years before by the Roman senate when Cicero was consul, at his instance, in recording the speech of Cato the Younger in the Catiline debate" (pp. 16-17). Further on, he gives us the history of it with more detail, and it is of prime importance in considering how it was possible to record the Sermon on the Mount, particularly the intricate precepts.

[6] *Loc. cit.*, 14th ed., X, 537-8.

It is conceded by all the leading scholars that Jesus spoke Aramaic, and that his knowledge of the Scriptures came either from a version in that tongue or he had been instructed by teachers in the synagogue, who translated the Hebrew into the speech he knew. He spoke to people who knew his tongue. Even the Pharisees and the Herodians knew it, for it is not at all likely that they heard him in any other. Hebrew had long since ceased to be the language of the people, particularly in Galilee and neighborhood, the "circle of the Gentiles," or as Matthew speaks of it: "Galilee of the Gentiles."

Jesus made no prepared speeches. He did not speak from notes. But returning to the authorship of the original record, who heard and remembered his sayings when the disciples were not present? Peter and the others were sent away on the work of the mission, and while they were absent Jesus passed alone from place to place, speaking to the people. How long the disciples were away on their missionary errand is not stated, but if they were gone for only a month, they would have missed hearing many of the sayings. Who, then, was present to take note of them? Joachim Jeremias, Professor in the University of Göttingen, who has given us an instructive book, called *Unknown Sayings of Jesus*, tells us that the sayings at first were circulated orally:

> . . . For a long period all the tradition about Jesus, his sayings and deeds, his life, death, and resurrection, was purely oral. During those critical decades when the new faith was spreading to Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, the Gospel, so far as we know, existed only in oral form. . . .[7]

If this means that there was no written work for the evangelists to use, we are at a loss to understand the pronouncement of the great scholars who place their faith in an original in Aramaic. Perhaps Jeremias really means that only the tradition of the first Christian bodies to be formed after the death of Jesus depended upon word of mouth. That is possible, and would account for the wide area over which the news spread.

Another problem we have to face in this matter is to try to discover in what way the speeches were recorded at first and for what reason. None of the scholars I have read is inclined to dispute their patent clarity, in the sense that a reporter might have been present to write them down as they were spoken. Nearly all of them give the sense of the immediate present; few give the impression that they were spoken even the day before. This seems to stamp them with a reality that carries conviction that someone—not a disciple—had a hand in this work.

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[7] Trans. by Reginald H. Fuller, London, S.P.C.K., 1957, p. 2.

Let us now regard the matter from the viewpoint of the reliance that can be placed upon memory. If it be assumed that these sayings were put together after Jesus died, the idea must be considered as a miracle of recollection, for not one of the disciples was prepared for the good tidings of the mission. Also, it must be remembered that Jesus was not speaking to Christians. Referring to the "preaching" of the gospel by Jesus, according to Mark, Wellhausen, in trying to reconcile the different accounts, "states that for the Jewish listeners the judgement is not *good* news and the future coming of the kingdom no news at all. He concludes that the allusions here to 'gospel' are 'Christian embellishments' which do not agree with the content of the gospel as here stated by Mark."[8]

Many of these sayings would mean nothing to illiterate people of any race. Some of them are quite difficult enough for the educated man of today to understand. Neither Jews nor Gentiles were looking for a spiritual utopia. All were looking for a promised land in which they would eat bread without scarceness.

The disciples were Jews; the audience Jews and Gentiles. Then it should be asked what particular reason had any of them for memorizing words that conveyed to them a message they did not understand. This matter goes even farther. Who can remember what he heard last week about one of the burning questions of the day? From the time of Plato to this century, critics of our mentality have derided our short-lived recollections of important affairs.

In this respect I have had a unique experience, both as a stage director and a politician. If those of our critics who would have us imagine the sayings of Jesus were remembered by those who heard them knew the difficulties encountered by a skilled actor in memorizing his lines, they would alter their opinion; and as for members of legislatures remembering the wording of vital clauses in measures passed only the session before, any librarian of the assembly would lay that notion, by saying that most of his time was occupied in looking through *Hansard* or the *Congressional Record* for the exact words used by a member in his speech.

Papias wrote about one hundred years after the death of Jesus, and it was he who was responsible (according to Eusebius, the Christian historian) for circulating the statement about Peter in Rome telling the story of Jesus to Mark. Papias received his information from the Presbyter, but no one knows exactly who this informant was, whether he was an Asiatic Christian or one of the disciples. The confusion caused by the statement of Papias still exists in the minds of some scholars. When evidence of this order has been thoroughly examined, it simmers down to mere conjecture. It has already been suggested that Papias was in conflict with sections of the churches that had other ideas about Jesus, his life and mission, and that he was obliged to resort to the Peter story (which he undoubtedly heard and believed) as a means of fortifying his people against the attacks of his opponents. The most important critics who have written on this particular subject, such as Canon B. H. Streeter, Joseph Klausner, and Charles Guignebert among others, reject it.

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[8] Cited by James M. Robinson in *The Problem of History in Mark*, London, SCM Press, 1957, p. 23.

The oral notion of the circulation and preservation of the sayings, as we find them in Matthew, is not tenable. The Papias story must have been based on mere rumor, for not one of the disciples could have heard them all, and not one was prepared to write them down, or even to retain them in mind. How, then, were they recorded and preserved in a document written in Aramaic, which most of the scholars think formed the basis of the three Gospels?

Let us call to mind once more the declared intention of the shocked Pharisees and the startled Herodians. Early in the teaching career of Jesus, Herod thought he might be John the Baptist come to light again. The combination of the Pharisees and the Herodians was regarded by Jesus as a sinister one. Many passages give us that impression. The trap that was laid to catch him was set early in his career, and as I shall explain in detail later, perhaps a spy was selected to track him. If we carry the notion this far, we might use our imagination further and describe the kind of person who would be selected for this work.

In the northern towns of Galilee there were not only retinues of Pompey's court and of the Herods but there were undoubtedly in the cities literate officials left over by the Macedonian invasion to look after Greek interests. Is it carrying the notion too far to say that the business of foreign affairs was carried out, then, very much as it is now, and that linguists were required for dealing with foreigners? The business of finance and commerce would be carried on after the wars then just as it is now, and we may feel sure that in one of the departments Aramaic-speaking Gentiles would keep watch upon seditious movements. They had had a long experience of this, and perhaps their spies were present when the crowds went to John to be baptized in Jordan. It is not likely that this event would be overlooked.

Now Jesus was baptized before he went to Capernaum, where he found Peter. We may take it that Capernaum was the home of this fisherman. Some of the scholars tell us that the whole district was seething with sedition. This condition of affairs would call for spies who thoroughly understood the language of the people. What difficulty would there have been in selecting men to watch Jesus and catch him in a speech that smacked of treason? That the gospel of the mission itself was harmless is perhaps one reason why he was permitted to pursue it for something like two years. The idealism of the kingdom of God was no heresy and in no way dangerous to the existing tenure of the State.

There have been severe critics of the authenticity of the sayings in Matthew, and not a few renowned Jewish scholars have taken exception to the notion that they were original with Jesus. Some of them urge that they are to be found in the Talmud and other Jewish literature. Joseph Klausner, in *Jesus of Nazareth*, deals with this matter. He says:

> . . . . Not all of these sayings may have been uttered by Jesus, but they are all in accordance with his spirit and they are all of distinct originality. Yet, with Geiger and Graetz, we can aver, without laying ourselves open to the charge of subjectivity and without any desire to argue in defence of Judaism, that *throughout* the Gospels there is not one item of ethical teaching which can not be paralleled either in the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, or in the Talmudic and Midrashic literature of the period near to the time of Jesus.[9]

It may be asked if the inference to be drawn from this is that Jesus was familiar with the Jewish literature mentioned by Geiger and Graetz, and that he repeated sayings current among the peasantry of southern Galilee. Where would he find a copy of the Talmud? That book, as we know it, was not compiled and edited until long after his death, and the sources from which it was put together were too scattered and fragmentary for anyone but an expert Jewish scholar to use. Have not these critics ignored the fact that they were spoken, not read? Furthermore, they seem to have overlooked the line of ethical consistency throughout the mission, which leads to a perfect climax.

It began with the aim of seeing justice fulfilled. At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told the people how it was to be achieved: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice." Perhaps this may be found as an isolated saying in the Talmud as well as in other Jewish literature, but neither Klausner nor any of the other critics I have read seem to realize that only with Jesus did it become the coping stone of a philosophy.

The originality of the sayings does not lie in any one or two isolated ones picked from all those set down in Matthew. Indeed, Klausner says that "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is found in Jewish literature, although not expressed in the same way. Perhaps others, too, having the same sense, were put in a different form. All that is fair criticism, but it overlooks entirely the originality that shines forth clearly in massing them together as one philosophical ideal.

What they were in the original tongue is hard to say. But we are not wrong in thinking that those that might have been in the speech of the people as, for instance, an adage, a maxim or a proverb, were transmuted by Jesus into a form not unlike the translations from the Greek and those from the Latin Vulgate. In them there is an iridescence of rhetorical beauty. They are perfectly fashioned for their purpose. Most of them are in short sentences, as if made to be readily remembered. If we heard them today from a speaker, we might call them "crystals."

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[9] *Loc. cit.*, p. 384.

Their originality is to be found in their definite purpose. They are of that time and no other in Jewish history, and they hark back a thousand years to the prophecy of Samuel, made when the people demanded a king. Behind them lie the denunciations and the exhortations of Amos, Isaiah, and the minor prophets. The cumulative effect of the philosophy as a whole remains to this day in the minds of the greatest scholars of this era the unequalled achievement of a God-given genius.

Jesus took the key word "justice"! The knowledge of its use is essential for an understanding of the aim and purpose of the Mosaic Law. Justice is the foundation stone of Torah. However, it is an insurmountable difficulty for a people of a civilization to grasp the simplicity of the original plan made for the enjoyment of the Promised Land. City-bred people who have lost the sense of the soil are numb to it. It is not a matter of whether it is practical or not, as we regard things, or even as they regarded things in Jerusalem before the fall. The practicality of it is not in question, because it is a law of divine will, to be followed by man if he would escape the curse of Cain and build cities.

Jesus makes this plain. The Creator knows better what is good for man than man does himself; and, so far, the histories of the ancient world and of the Christian one reveal this terrible fact: that man without justice is little better than the brute. The philosophy of Jesus is for the individual, not for groups, although he spoke to crowds. Man must live his own life, and there is no debate about the question of his being responsible for his actions.

Is it a practical philosophy? Yes, for the individual. Millions of men have proved it, but we hear little about them. The heroes of justice are of no particular interest to those who make heroes of empire builders and empire destroyers.

In these sayings we cannot find the slightest hint of another political system. Nowhere does he mention a new messiah of the Davidic line. This should not be strange to the critics, whether Jewish or Christian, for Galilee, within the recollection of his grandfather, had been torn by the wars of politicians. Surely it was enough for anyone who could have heard of Pompey and Herod, to be convinced that spiritual and economic redemption was no part of the plans of conquerors. Indeed, the rebellions that took place in Judea and in Galilee against the iniquitous systems of taxation had failed utterly to bring relief to the people. The advent of a political messiah was a vain hope. Therefore, it was time to turn to God and have faith in His bounty. In that way justice might be realized.

CHAPTER III

THE FAMILY OF JOSEPH

Life in a Galilean village was simple enough when Jesus was born. His father was a carpenter. The articles that he would make would be tables, chairs, beds, ploughs and goads, and other implements for tilling the soil. His customers would be those in and near the village. The towns were too far away for Joseph to do business there. We can imagine that he might be called upon to make some repairs at Sepphoris, which had suffered from the attack of Judas of Galilee (Acts 5:37). It would be only a few hours' journey for him.

I have been in the house where Joseph lived, according to the popular idea held in Nazareth, and it seemed to me there was little room to spare for Joseph's large family. Perhaps they had to make room for the father of Joseph, who would have reached an age when he would no longer toil or look after himself. He is not mentioned by any of the scholars, but to my mind he should not be overlooked, for he would be a recorder of the tribulations of Galilee during the governorship of Herod. Perhaps we are so ingrained with the notions of the facts of history that the exercise of a little imagination calls for some courage; as for Joseph and his father, it might help us in understanding some of the philosophy of Jesus. These men—father and grandfather of the one who brought the glad tidings of love and peace—would be the historians who gave to the boy the tales of the various wars that raged in Galilee from the time of the Maccabees. Joseph's father would be able to tell what he had learned from his father. This is the way in which simple people learn about the great events that have occurred—by word of mouth. It seems to me that Jesus as a youth had a long record of disastrous events to ponder. His wisdom had a potent history behind it.

The work of a carpenter in a village does not call for speed in making articles, and we may wonder what Joseph did with his time when trade was slack. In the small villages of England fifty years ago (and I knew many of them) the carpenter, the butcher, and other tradesmen had garden plots behind their houses, some of them about half an acre in extent. Here they grew vegetables for daily consumption and stored some of them for the winter. There would be three or four damson trees and two or three apple and pear trees. These people nearly always kept a pig, and the parings and peelings of vegetables were mixed with the swill and put into a trough. One job in the autumn was the "hodding" of potatoes for the winter supply. When I was a child of seven, I carried the straw for its lining to my grandfather. And my grandmother taught me how to make pegs.

This sketch, from memory, of the activities of tradesmen in villages differs not so much from what I imagine Joseph did in his spare time. But when I was in Nazareth, I did not see around the house where a garden could have been cultivated. If I remember correctly, it was a rocky mound. Still, it might have been quite different in the days when Jesus was a boy. For the glowing accounts which the scholars and the archaeologists give us of the fertile conditions of Galilee are in sad contrast to the denuded country that I saw six years after the First World War.

Although we have had volume after volume informing us of the spread of Hellenism all through the countries east of the Mediterranean, no one has ventured to say that its influence touched the native people in the villages. Nor was it likely that the foreign trade carried on to the north and south would filter into hamlets where peasants lived from hand to mouth.

The people spoke the Aramaic tongue. This is a matter that must be carefully considered, for the language problem looms large in some of the most momentous events of the life of Jesus. It has been suggested that Peter might have learned some Greek words. That may be so, but Peter was a fisherman, and probably visited the towns to sell his catch, and there he would undoubtedly find Gentiles who spoke Greek and who had servants who did. There is nothing strange in that. But it is quite another thing to imagine that Jesus, in an isolated village, a full day's journey from the two principal towns, would come in contact with people speaking Greek. Indeed, I hope to show that he knew no other language but his native Aramaic, and there are in the Gospels sufficient proofs of this to satisfy a scholar whose mind has not been firmly set against the notion.

Now how was he schooled? Who taught him to speak clearly in words familiar to his hearers? No one before him or after has left in prose or verse sentences of such purity of style, containing wisdom so precious that for nearly two thousand years they have shone with a brilliance that no amount of controversy could dim.

No archaeologist, Jew or Gentile, has yet discovered at Nazareth or near by the ruin of a synagogue. Although in recent years something like eleven foundations have been found, not one of them is indicated on the maps of Galilee in the time of Jesus. The report in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* states: "Recently discovered ruins of synagogues in *Northern* Galilee, belonging probably to the second, some perhaps to the first, Christian century, furnish scanty, but the safest, information regarding the architecture of ancient synagogues."[1]

This is a matter that deserves deeper consideration than has been given to it by the experts. It impinges again upon the language problem. If Jesus knew Hebrew so well as to study Torah, who taught him? According to Klausner's treatment of this question, we infer that only a rabbi could have been his teacher. Yet, he knew the Law. Was there a written Aramaic version of Torah at that time? Did his father or his grandfather know it by ear, as many Nonconformists during the eighteenth century memorized parts of the Bible and spoke them at their religious gatherings? Many of these people could neither read nor write, and yet they could recite long passages from the Gospels. Indeed, it was from these people that the pulpits of Wesleyan, Baptist, Methodist and other such sects found their recruits for the ministry. When the nineteenth century was ushered in, these sects started schools of their own, and students who promised to learn the Scriptures were encouraged by rich patrons, and scholarships were founded to enable them to reach the ministry.

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[1] *Loc. cit.*, "Synagogue," IV, 4835.

Oral instruction must not be overlooked as a foundation from which many scholars of renown gained distinction. From father who could not read or write they first learned in childhood to love what was called "Bible English." These memories of what was done in England spur my imagination in this attempt to find a reasonable method of how Jesus was schooled.

Although Klausner is under the impression that there was a synagogue at Nazareth, he does not tell us that he has evidence of it. It borders on impudence for a layman to disagree with the most eminent Jewish scholar who has written upon the Gospels and the Epistles. However, he tells us in another place that the Law was read in Hebrew and translated to the people in Aramaic. Surely this leads to the conclusion that very little Hebrew had been taught in the villages of Galilee. There is no doubt that a great deal is taken for granted, and much of the opinion of the experts in Bible history is colored by the stories told in Luke. Yet, we may be sure of this: by the time the Gospel was written, which was accredited to Luke, the divinity school of Paul had decided to dispense entirely with the historic Jesus.

Now whether or not one version or another of the Law was known to Jesus, it is a matter upon which the controversialists cannot find agreement, and ever since the days of the split in the Ebionite sect upon the problem of the divinity of Jesus, no common ground of understanding has been found. We, however, know that the Septuagint version was in use at the beginning of this era. In an informative introduction to a new edition of *The Septuagint Bible*,[2] C. A. Muses, the editor, tells us: "It is established by abundant and widely scattered evidence that the Septuagint text of the Bible was the one in use in the days of Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples."

After the birth of Jesus, Mary had four sons and two daughters. Therefore, Joseph must have lived at least until his eldest son had reached the age of ten or twelve. How soon after that he passed away, no one has ventured to say. With such a large family, life must have been very hard for the parents, and we wonder when Jesus became the breadwinner of the house. This seems to have been overlooked by scholars, and yet it is a very important matter. Many of the scholars have excused the great gap from birth to the time of the baptism in Jordan as nothing unusual in Jewish annals. They are concerned with the deeds or sayings of the famous man, and Klausner points out that that is a reason why we know so little about Moses from the day the princess adopted him and the hour when he slew the Egyptian guard. It might also be said that many of the deeds and sayings would have been far better understood if we had known more about the youth of these men. Strange to say, one of the most famous was the youngest son of Jesse, and the tales told of his youth are quite contrary to what Klausner considers is the usual method of Jewish writers to ignore the period of youth.

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[2] Indian Hills, Colorado, The Falcon's Wing Press, 1954, pp. xxii-xxiii.

He would be a reader of no high merit in such a case as this to disregard as unimportant what the life of Jesus was from the time that his father died until his mission began. Think of what the experts admit had taken place in Galilee from the time he was born. They tell us the whole country was ravaged by war and that the people of the villages were reduced to penury. Is it to be imagined for a moment that the country of the Gentiles, despised by the Samaritans, their neighbors to the south, could uninterruptedly carry on the services of the synagogues, and that the rabbis might visit the small villages to instruct the children? Such a condition seems utterly impossible during the period of the revolt of Judas and the extortions demanded by Herod and the Romans. One picture of the State gives us the impression of havoc turned to chaos; the other that a normal state of affairs was maintained. The contradiction is absurd.

Now where was Jesus in all this? Sepphoris fell when he was four years old, or perhaps had reached the age of seven. Is it thinkable that the village of Nazareth, only a few miles away from this arsenal, was unaffected by the attack? We know what happens in modern times when an insurrection takes place against a legitimate government. But here in Galilee there was no legitimate government at that time. The country was in the possession of the Romans and Herod, and their soldiers were in action for a long time afterwards, suppressing the revolt. How could Nazareth escape? What Jesus did not see or know, surely his father or his grandfather would tell him. And it is this matter that is so important in the attempt to discover the causes that shaped his philosophy, in which there is no compromise with the tyrannies of political power. The bureaucratic rule of imperial Rome envisaged by Jesus and the foisting of an alien Idumean governor upon the people were the very antithesis of a heaven on earth under God's rule.

For six or seven years Jesus must have plied his trade as a carpenter. Fathers taught their sons their craft. It was as much the law as Torah itself. Why not use our imagination and make an attempt to supply the facts that are missing in the story? If Joseph died soon after the birth of the last child, the youngest one might have been a babe of twelve months. And in that case there would be two in the toddling stage. Any observant person who is aware of what goes on in his neighborhood should know what it means to undertake such a task as that which perhaps was imposed upon Jesus by the loss of his father.

What has confused so many of the scholars concerning this horrible condition is the story in Luke of the visit of Jesus and his parents to Jerusalem for the festival. The period is marked by the age of the boy who at twelve years was expounding the Scriptures to the doctors in the Temple. Luke tells us that his father and his mother spent three days searching for him. Who has asked, in reading this story, how Mary could leave Nazareth when there were perhaps six little ones there to be cared for? The story does not make sense. Moreover, Guignebert tells us that it was not the usual thing for the wife to accompany her husband on such occasions. The gaps and contradictions are wide open and palpable. When the parents found him in the Temple, Luke says "they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing" (2:48).

Here, Mary designates Joseph as the father, and there is not the slightest doubt that Jesus knew him as such. But the important point in the story is that Joseph was alive when Jesus was twelve years old. How soon after the return to Nazareth the father died is merely a matter of conjecture. All we do know from Mark is that Jesus was about twenty-six or twenty-seven years old when he was baptized by John. Penury suffered by a widow and her children is such a common lot that we sometimes forget the heroic deeds performed by the poor who despise communal charity.

Therefore, my mind has for many years been haunted with the thought of the probable extremities of existence that faced Jesus after the death of his father. For him to rise superior to the afflictions of dearth—of meager means and hungry children—to become the world's greatest poet is a miracle of heroism. I may be wrong in treating the subject in this manner, but I think it is incumbent upon me to be frank with my reader and let him know the thoughts that have come to my mind in pondering the problem of how Jesus existed from the time of the death of his father until he went to Jordan.

There may be reasons other than those advanced by Klausner for the omission of particulars of the life of Joseph's family. No one can ponder the problems that arise about the movements of the family, the long journeys that they took, and the rapid increase in children, without asking the question, "How was it all done?" Take, for example, the flight into Egypt. The Gospel tells us that Jesus was a babe. But no one has yet explained how this lowly family accomplished the journey and how long it took. The problem becomes more difficult if we take heed of some to the suggestions made by theologians about the difficulties of the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem to attend festivals. One states that a Galilean family would not go down straight through Samaria, a three days' journey from Nazareth, but they would take a roundabout way through Perea and down through Jericho into Jerusalem, occupying seven days.[3] If they could not go through Samaria when Jesus was twelve years old, they would not have risked the journey through Samaria with a babe, when the flight to Egypt was made. Where they were in Egypt, no one knows, nor does anyone suggest how life was sustained during the journey.

But the more important question is how long did they remain there? It is not unreasonable to think that probably Mary was carrying a child when they reached their destination. Was the next child born there? The problem is fraught with many difficulties, to say nothing of additional burdens to care for on the journey back to Nazareth.

The story in Luke about a child of twelve conversing with the doctors upon the Scriptures is not told in Mark or Matthew. Some of the scholars consider it the redressing of an old myth, and by the time that Luke came upon the scene, some of the oldest myths were revived, and filled the minds of those who rejected the historic Jesus.

There is a wide difference of opinion among the higher critics and scholars concerning these problems. Some reject them as interpolations to meet the needs of the servant prophecies. The student, on reading Luke's story of the boy of twelve with the doctors in the Temple, may call to mind the conditions in it when Jesus found there the money lenders and changers and the sellers of doves. The sordid conditions he encountered there as a man must have been absent when he was there as a boy. And yet we learn from some of the New Testament critics that the uses of the Temple had degenerated gravely after the death of Herod. It is impossible to reconcile the differences in the stories, and it is not surprising to find some of the most renowned Bible scholars casting doubt upon them.

After the death of Joseph, the burden of providing for the family fell upon the bone and sinew of Jesus. He had to labor at his craft, and no doubt the two older of his brothers were apprenticed to him. The making of ploughs, yokes and other agricultural implements would perhaps occupy most of his time; another branch of the craft was the making of simple household furniture. The boys would do the rough work and Jesus the finishing.

There was, besides, the cultivation of the garden patch for food. Meat would be eaten rarely, if at all, for if we accept the accounts of Josephus and other reporters of that time, there would not be much pasture for cattle. No doubt sheep roamed the hills in search of food, but whatever mutton would be left for home consumption, after the markets had been supplied, would not go very far.

[3] Dmitri Merejkowski, *Jesus the Unknown*, trans. by H. C. Matheson, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934, p. 202.

After three or four years' practical training, the brothers of Jesus would have reached the journeyman stage and have probably become efficient craftsmen. They would save him journeys to the nearby villages, seeking orders and perhaps selling small tools and household wares.

In this inquiry I am seeking a preparation period for Jesus—a time when he had the leisure to store his mind with the truths of the Law, and form the ideas which were to be expressed in short sentences to his hearers when he started his mission. He would not be the first of the world's geniuses to indulge in his youth in hours of deep meditation. We are misled by the seeming spontaneity of the recorded sayings. As we read them, they seem to come flowing freely from his tongue. His fluency, his ready answers to questions deceive us in this way. To me after years of experience in lecturing and delivering addresses from political platforms, all his sayings denote a studied preparation in hours of loneliness. Goethe said:

> Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
>   Who never spent the darksome hours
> Weeping, and watching for the morrow,—
>   He knows you not, ye heavenly Powers.[4]

There must have been eight or ten years before he went to John at the Jordan, when he "ate his bread in sorrow" and spent many lonely hours wondering what the morrow would bring forth. It is in these hours when everything about us is turmoil and anguish that we yearn for another world. Who can doubt the probability that his idea of a new kingdom of God's justice was born in that period?

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[4] *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, Book II, chap. 13.

CHAPTER IV

THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF ISRAEL

We are nearing the goal of our quest—Nazareth, the place where Jesus was born. The nearest villages to it are Nain and Cana. It stands in an isolated position from the cities. Tiberias (the new city) and Capernaum lie about twenty miles away on the west side of the lake. Caesarea Philippi is a long distance to the northeast. The country round about was fertile agricultural land and must have been tilled by people who had long resided there, peasant farmers and small holders.

The description of Galilee as a land of abundance given in many of the books of the scholars astonishes us because the land was the scene of many tramping armies. Alexander was followed by Pompey, and Pompey by other Roman generals. However, the fighting forces found little to loot down the central portion of the land, and perhaps that is the reason why Josephus described it in such glowing terms. Joseph Klausner, in his study, *Jesus of Nazareth*, places before us a picture of the Galilean country which is not far short of a region of milk and honey. He tells us that in the time of Jesus, the Jews were essentially an agricultural people. Indeed, Josephus said that Galilee "was wholly under cultivation and seemed to be one great garden."[1]

The district was well watered, which contributed to its fertility and fruitfulness. The wheat, corn and straw of Galilee were famous. Great varieties of vegetables and fruits were also grown in abundance. The date palm was a source of diverse products which were exported, including date palm oil and date honey. The vineyards were famous as was the quality of the wine.

Besides agriculture, the Galileans engaged in fishing, sheep and cow raising, and dairying. As one would expect, the fishing centered around the Sea of Galilee, with Tiberias as the center. A large part of the population earned its subsistence on small holdings, and of this class, Dr. Klausner says:

> These "small-holders" lived by the labour of their hands. They, their wives and children, did their own ploughing and sowing, reaping and sheaf-binding, threshing and winnowing. Most of their produce they reserved for their own household needs, and the rest was brought to the town and either bartered or sold for money to procure absolute necessaries. Such a peasant was not able to lay by any wealth, and one or two years of bad seasons or illness would be enough to deprive him of his property and reduce him to the status of a hireling or labourer, or

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[1] Klausner, *op. cit.*, pp. 174 ff.

> even cause him to be sold into slavery to a richer landowner because of his debts. . . .[2]

Joseph Klausner gives us a vivid account of the political turmoil which seethed in Galilee for many years. He says:

> . . . The most dangerous rebel of all, whose great strength lay in his being inspired by a feeling of nationalism, was Judah the Galilaean. . . .
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> Near Sepphoris, only an hour's journey from Jesus' birthplace, Nazareth, Judah the Galilaean collected a large body of desperate nationalists, attacked the king's armoury, seized the weapons and with these armed his followers, and took away all the money he found. Then the warrior-zealot fought against all those, Gentiles or Jews, who opposed the idea of freedom; and, as is usual in such campaigns, he made little distinction between actual enemies and traitors, and those who were merely peace-loving Jews. He put the fear of himself on the whole of Galilee.
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> Such was the state of Judaea, and especially Galilee, immediately after the death of Herod. The revolt spread throughout all the provinces, Judaea, Idumaea, Galilee and beyond Jordan; no quarter was given to any Roman legion or to any Herodian soldiers or to anybody who did not enroll himself as a member of some nationalist party—complete anarchy prevailed: "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." And all this, it should be emphasized, happened only three or four years before the birth of Jesus.[3]

I may remark it is rather strange that we should have to go to an eminent Jewish historian for such information. The question of taxation loomed so large in the life of Jesus that one wonders why the crusade of Judas the Galilean is not emphasized. As Sepphoris was not far away from Nazareth, undoubtedly Joseph, the father of Jesus, would have learned of the rebellion of Judas.

This was not the only revolt in Galilee; there were others besides, which perhaps took place either when Joseph was young or in the days of his father. The virtual silence maintained by many of the Gospel scholars on these affairs is inexplicable. The only reason I can think of is that such questions as fiscal impositions and religious interference might have a tendency to turn the mind of hearers of the Gospels to mundane affairs. But I will deal with this at greater length when we come to the events that took place at Capernaum and, afterwards, during the last days in Jerusalem.

It is a mistake often made, even in the works of profound scholars, to separate the religious problems from those that are economic. Each affects the other; for the taxation upon the products of the fields and the waters reduced the amount left for the payment of tithe; and this question was raised frequently. Moreover, the taxation of wealth was anathema to Israel and the cause of some of the worst of her troubles. Before the time of Saul, no political government had been established in the land. The producers were promised the enjoyment of the fruit of their hands, after they paid the tenth to the Levites. There is no record that the Judges were paid. Their duties seem to have been performed freely.

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

If the reader wishes to have a definite pronouncement upon the result of instituting a king in Israel, all he has to do is to read the warning of Samuel of what would happen to them if they set up a political government (I Samuel 8:10-18). Tribute, a tax on wealth, is nothing more nor less than legal stealing. But how else can politicians exist and carry out their duties? The world's record of their work can be summed up in two words: interference and restriction.

The warnings and admonitions concerning this practice are set down clearly in the Pentateuch. Even gifts are dangerous, for we read: "And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous" (Exod. 23:8).

In Ezekiel, also, we find the matter put forth in the clearest terms. In his "ideal state" there was no such thing as taxes; "the prince maintains his court and officers out of the revenue of the princely domains."[4] This seems to have been the condition which existed also in earlier times, and it was only in "extraordinary emergencies" that a property tax was imposed.

After the return to the Promised Land, in the period which is called post-exilic, we find that at the time of Ezra the taxes became burdensome because so much money was required to restore the religious places and the sanctuaries. Here the religious requirements were bound up in the tribute to be paid with other services, and the economic distress that followed was brought to the notice of Nehemiah.

As the priesthood grew in power, their demands for increased taxation grew. Dr. Grant in his book, *Economic Background of the Gospels*, counts twelve different levies imposed by the priesthood. He states further:

> In our period the tithe was probably limited to fruits of the soil of *Palestine*. Artisans, fishermen, tradesmen, etc., paid no tithe; nor was any tithe paid by Jews living outside "the land," i.e., in the Diaspora. The most natural result in the world of such unintentional discrimination was a decline of agriculture in Palestine, and emigration of a certain number of the most essential producing class—the farmers.[5]

The rapacity of the priests was equal to that of the Roman procurators and Herod himself. There are stories in Jewish literature that give examples of the greed of those who multiplied tithes to such an extent that, in some cases, it was estimated that it rose from the tenth to between thirty and forty per cent of the produce.

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[4] *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, "Taxation and Tribute," by Dr. Immanuel Benzinger, IV, 4908.

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 95*n*.

Klausner sums it up in some forceful passages:

> Money was required for all this. Furthermore he [Herod] was obliged to placate the Romans, to give many presents to their politicians and bribes to their generals. He also kept a brilliant court, a great palace and an army of mercenaries and spies and innumerable detectives: there was no end to his expenses. The necessary funds could be got only by confiscation of property, unbearable taxation, and an economic policy beyond the powers of such a small country and contrary to the inclination of the Jewish farming class who, after all, were the backbone of the nation in those days. . . .[6]

The record of the economic disaster is extant, but the lesson that it provides for thinking men failed to reach the masses, who are concerned chiefly with things of the moment. The perils encountered by the civilizations of the past do not interest them. Therefore, they make the same mistakes that have brought great empires to desuetude. Greece learned nothing from Persia, and Rome learned nothing from Greece. No matter where we look, we find that the taxation of wealth is the canker that eats into the very foundations of the State and leaves it destitute of everything but a memory.

Franz Oppenheimer, who wrote what has been called the classic on the State, defined the term clearly: "The state is the organization of the political means for the expropriation of the economic means." Surely we can say that that fits the case of Israel. When the masses know the real cause of their daily tribulations, there may be a change. But where will we find the Augustine or the Hildebrand, who will mince no words about its iniquities? Is it to be imagined for a moment that a modern politician would have the courage of the Bishop of Hippo, who said, "If justice be put to one side what are kingdoms save instances of robbery on a large scale? For that matter, what are robberies more than kingdoms on a small scale?"[7]

Renan seems to have had a clearer idea of the constitution of the Hebrew theocracy than some of our modern writers have. He says in a few words:

> . . . God being the sole Master whom man ought to recognize, to pay tithe to a secular sovereign was, in a manner, to put him in the place of God. Completely ignorant of the idea of the State, the Jewish theocracy only acted up to its logical induction—the negation of civil society and of all government. The money of the public treasury was accounted stolen money. . . .[8]

Surely the time has come when thoughtful readers will turn to the Old Testament again, for it contains the clearest story of how the land problem brought the fairest hopes to naught, and scattered the people all over the earth. It is a history of fundamental economic problems and covers a period of more than two thousand years. There is nothing to be compared with it in the literature of the world. Neither Greek nor Roman historian has revealed the problem that brought their States to decay and disintegration as the Hebrew prophets did for their people. The false notion that economic problems are not religious will not stand, for Moses made no such distinction, and not one of the prophets dissociated one from the other.

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[6] *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 190.

[7] Quoted by Frank Gavin, *Seven Centuries of the Problem of Church and State*, Princeton Univ. Press, 1938, p. 36.

[8] Ernest Renan, *The Life of Jesus*, Modern Library, 1927, p. 110.

Many of the scholars give no heed at all to the lament of Job, who put this problem tersely (24:2). The description of the conditions rife in the land make painful reading, even at this time.

The woes of Israel, as described by the prophets, cannot be understood by those who neglect to study the law of the landmark. It is the symbol of economic justice for Israel. Yet, as the principle is of universal application, so it may be said that many of the other laws, especially made for the children of Jacob, may be applied to any and every other people. Nearly all of them have a universal application.

Galilee, before the beginning of this era, had been torn for many years by wars and rebellions. She was under the heel of Rome, and the province was administered by a hated Idumean. There were detectives and spies to report to the tetrarch any new uprising, such as that of Judas the Gaulonite. In a lowly village there was born, in the year Herod the Great died, the man whose name was to dominate the world drama of soul-seeking men for nineteen centuries. Jesus of Nazareth, the Galilean prophet, who came to give glad tidings to men, gave to them a philosophy of Peace. The wisdom of it was far too profound for those who had been adherents of the mystery cults. They heeded it not and abandoned him to the wiles of the State.

What we owe to the son of a carpenter is still to be appreciated by those who have written so much upon the Gospels. Nevertheless, the drama of his life is enacted year in, year out, through all the perversities of controversy, through all the bitterness of internecine wars, and remains impervious to the neglect of those whose souls he came to save from despair.

CHAPTER V

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

It is not my intention to deal with the authenticity of the Gospels, nor indeed with their age. All this has been thoroughly investigated by the most renowned scholars, and for any student who wishes to read a compendious treatment of the subject, I would recommend Professor Charles Guignebert's *Jesus*. He was Professor of the History of Christianity at the Sorbonne. His work was translated from the French into many other languages, and the American edition appeared in 1956.[1] It is the most comprehensive of all the works on the Nazarene. One great advantage to be gained from it is that Guignebert gives the reader the opinions and findings of the chief experts who have written upon the Gospels.

It is far from my intention to deal with the miracles attributed to Jesus. They call for a specialist who has studied these freaks of nature so dear to the hearts of wonder-seekers. Notwithstanding the severe examination to which they have been submitted, there is this to say: that, in the time of Jesus, the peoples in many lands sought ardently for a catastrophic change and the dawn of a new world. They were sick unto death of empires and the dreadful consequences wrought by ambitious politicians and their servitors.

The term "Christ" is the Greek word for messiah, and those who know their Old Testament prophets will readily understand how the people of Israel sought for one after the pattern described by Isaiah. My purpose, therefore, lies in another direction: it is to salvage in the Gospels the historic Jesus. This can be done only by a clear understanding of the man and his mission. In this respect, miracles add nothing to his stature. No amount of gnostic lore or doctrine can raise him above himself. He stands alone, impervious to embellishment of supernatural attributes.

He began his mission with a set purpose, which was to make men seek "the kingdom of God and his justice," and not with death staring him in the face would he renounce it or compromise upon a single jot of the truth of it. All this any intelligent reader can find for himself in the four Gospels. It needs no expert scholar versed in Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek to find the treasures of his philosophy in the Douay and the King James versions. Once set upon this task, devotion to it will lead the reader to the aphoristic gems that shine in his sayings; and once these are disentangled from the compilations of the interpolaters, they can be drawn together and framed into a perfect philosophy. If we accept the meaning of this word as "a way of life," we shall find it easy to recognize a fullness of spiritual glory in it. The object of his mission was declared to John before he baptized him in Jordan.

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[1] French ed. appeared in 1933; Eng. ed. trans. by S. H. Hooke, New York, University Books, 1956.

The prefatory verse that heads the first chapter of Mark must have been added many years after the crucifixion. It is Pauline in tone and certainly not couched in the language of men who were closely associated with Jesus during his lifetime. In the ninth verse the term "Christ" is missing. It reads as follows:

> And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan (Mark 1:9).

This is not the only instance of linking together and separating the two terms. We shall meet with this many times in the Acts and the Epistles, and it is not surprising that many Bible readers have asked how two distinct figures—one the historic Jesus, the other a creation made long after the death of the former—could act as one and the same person in several events described in the Gospels and the Epistles. In the Acts there are some curious instances of this.

It has been overlooked by many of our scholars that the baptism took place in the river Jordan *in Judea*. Both versions (Matthew and Mark) give the impression that the place where the ceremony was held was in the neighborhood of Jerusalem. Matthew says: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him" (Matt. 3:13).

It is three days' journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem through Samaria, a long distance in those days for news of such an event to spread. There seems to be something lacking here, which the editors of the Greek version might have thought not compatible with the object they had in view in compiling a Mark acceptable to the first Christians. There is much of this in Matthew, Mark and Luke, and in reading the Acts it is impossible to miss the dissensions that took place about doctrine and ritual during the lifetime of Peter. Guignebert has many passages upon this state of affairs. Here are two:

> . . . When in the last third of the second century the Church, endorsing the choice of the majority of its communities, gave to the Synoptics the sanction of her bishops, it was certainly not because she had preserved authentic information as to their authorship—her tradition on the subject is wholly theological and legendary. She approved them because they were congenial to her. . . .
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> We need only observe that our Synoptics have been in the canon longer than their text, which has suffered such deep-seated corruptions that in many places the original meaning has been lost with scant hope of its restoration.[2]

The question may be put, "Did John baptize in Jordan near Jerusalem?" The ceremonies must have lasted for several days, not only to give Jesus time to reach Jerusalem, but to deal with the crowds that flocked to the Baptist: "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan" (Matt. 3:5). Could such a demonstration be carried out without the interference of the Roman authority? Furthermore, it may be asked if the high priest would look upon the crowds moving towards the Jordan without anxiety.

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[2] *Op cit.*, pp. 29, 32.

Who was present when Jesus was baptized by John? The importance of this question has not been appreciated by scholar-critics, for I have not found one who has thought it worth consideration. Yet, an answer to it may have a bearing upon some of the most important events recorded in the Gospels. Some theologians regard the question as one of mere curiosity and too exacting to lead to any scriptural purpose. However, we must stress the nature of our inquiry and remind the reader that it is to discover the historical Jesus; and perhaps the event at Jordan in Judea marks the reason for the authorities suspecting the consequences of John's work. When Jesus took that long journey to meet John, he had not chosen one disciple. Mark could not have been there, for he is introduced to us only as an associate of Peter.

Pilate was in command at Jerusalem and Caiaphas was high priest. Both would suspect any movement of the people against authority. But it is not likely they would fear the call to repentance made by John. Rather their fear might have been about the action the people would take after responding to it.

How can we overlook the probability of the authorities, religious and political, spying upon such demonstrations? The revolts that had taken place in and about Judea, to say nothing of those in Galilee, had taught both Romans and Pharisees that rebellions may be put down but not utterly quashed; that grievance has not been removed even when quiet is restored. I suppose it was no different then than it was in the Christian Era, for the history of States even in the Dark Ages reveals uprisings of the folk whose demand was "grievance before supply." The authorities know that the levies of tax and tribute are responsible for rebellion. Aristotle says, "Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime." Hence, it is quite reasonable to imagine that spies were sent to John at the Jordan to take note of the proceedings.

The accounts of the baptism of Jesus differ somewhat in Mark and Matthew, and it should be pointed out that both descriptions have been embellished by a Pauline editor.

The version in Matthew about the meeting of Jesus and John gives us at once the purpose of the mission of Jesus. From the verse (3:15) as it stands, one feels that baptism was a secondary ceremony and the words: "Suffer it to be so now" imply a desire on the part of Jesus to begin without delay his mighty task "to fulfil all justice."

The version in Mark omits the announcement of the mission. It should be noticed that the actual baptism of Jesus was immersion in the waters of

Jordan and that in several passages in Mark it becomes a mystical rite. When Jesus sends the disciples out on their preaching mission, they are given by him the power to baptize. We may infer from this that they adopted the method of sprinkling the candidate for baptism. These may be small matters for discussion and would have been of no particular interest to the authorities. However, be this as it may, the chief point of our inquiry here is to ascertain, if possible, who was really present to make a report of what occurred.

After the baptism, Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days. Both Mark and Matthew agree upon this. But when he heard that the Baptist had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee and forthwith began "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:14).

We now reach a crucial point in the story of the gathering together of the men who became disciples. It is in two entirely different versions. In Mark we read:

> Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.
>
> And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.
>
> And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. . . . (1:16-18)
>
> And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught (1:21).

The story in Matthew is very different. It reads as follows:

> And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast . . . (4:13).

In Mark we learn that he encountered Peter before he went to Capernaum, and took him there. In Matthew, he goes alone, and after preaching there, he meets Peter and his brother and calls them to "follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (4:19).

These discrepancies in the first two Gospels have had the unfortunate effect of casting doubt upon both stories. The variance is not to be accounted for by suggesting that it did not suit the compilers of the two books to give Peter a leading role in the drama, although in reading Acts, it seems a plausible notion for deferring (in Matthew) the meeting with Peter until after the entrance into Capernaum. Many theories have occupied the minds of the Gospel critics concerning this difficulty.

Would it have arisen if the baptism scenes had taken place in the Jordan as it issues from the south end of the Lake of Galilee? Had that been the case, we might decide, without stretching the imagination too far, that it was possible that Peter and his brother and others about the shores of the Lake had been baptized by John. If this idea were accepted, it would meet the requirements of explaining how Peter could have known the story of the baptism in Judea, unless Jesus told him after the event; and also his readiness to comply with the command of Jesus to follow him.

The sudden meeting of Jesus with Peter makes us think the original narratives contained preparatory matter that has been excised. The way it is told convinces us that they were strangers, and we wonder how it was that Peter and his brother cast their nets away to follow Jesus. There is no hint at all of their knowing him or his gospel, for in the versions of Matthew and Mark, his mission did not begin until after he collected his disciples. What, then, impressed the first two with the idea that, in all probability, he was the messiah? They might have reasoned thus: David was a shepherd and he became king of Israel. Why should not a carpenter be a messiah? No matter how we regard this strange collection of common men, quite illiterate, becoming disciples of one whose philosophy reached the highest peak of thought, we remain mystified.

There is another matter that should be noted here: although at first glance it may seem rather trivial, it will assume more significance later on. This relates to the words "teaching" and "preaching." One verse in Mark, already quoted, tells us Jesus was "preaching" (1:14) and another that he was "teaching" (1:21). There is a difference in what these terms signify. At first it was *teaching*, according to the word *Didache*; and the *preaching* to congregations began at a much later period. Rudolf Bultmann says the preaching (*Kerygma*) started about A.D. 170. As we proceed with the sayings of Jesus, we shall see that he taught and did not preach. He was not a rabbi.

How much of Torah and the law of justice he learned from his father no one can say. But it was the duty of the parent to teach the child, and this process began at an early age, perhaps several years before the child would be taken to the synagogue. The version of the story that we read in Luke differs in many respects from those in Mark and Matthew, and in comparing them, we become aware of the peculiar patchwork the editors have made of the first three Gospels. Yet, all three evangelists must have had access to the same source, which goes by the name of Quelle, which, as nearly all the renowned scholars formerly thought, was in the Aramaic tongue.

In Luke, there are details given of the baptism story that are omitted in the two earlier Gospels. Take, for example, the advice that John gave to the publicans (tax gatherers) and the soldiers, who questioned him as to what they should do. To the former, he said: "Exact no more than that which is appointed you" (3:13). To the soldiers, he advised: "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages" (3:14).

The references to tax and to violence are quite in the spirit of the pronouncements of Isaiah and the minor prophets. Indeed, it may be said that these were two of the chief questions dealt with by Jesus in his speeches.

The story in Mark of the crowds that came in all directions to see and hear Jesus are not unusual exaggerations, but how the news of his fame spread is not easily understood. Who would carry the report of his teachings to Judea and to Sidon and Tyre? In this respect, it may be asked if the teaching was the attraction that moved these people, or on the other hand, the reports of the miracles he performed. The healing of the sick would be far more sensational than the good tidings of the coming of the kingdom of God.

The more one thinks about this matter, the more one doubts the understanding of the message; for Amos, Isaiah and the minor prophets drew no such congregations. Indeed, it may be said that their words generally fell upon deaf ears. And from this arises the much-debated matter of the understanding of the men who followed him, those who were to become the disciples. We know that Jesus was conscious they did not grasp the fullness of his message. Matthew was the only one who perhaps had sufficient schooling to qualify for the position of a toll collector. Some of the Gospel critics have ventured the opinion that he would have some knowledge of Greek. But as most of his work would be transacted with those who were not rich and whose speech was Aramaic, he would not have much opportunity to speak another language.

What really won them to Jesus, in all probability, were those characteristics of an unusual personage whose voice, manner and other magnetic qualities drew them and, in fact, endeared them to him. In no other way can it be explained how Peter and his brother put away their nets when he called them to follow him. He was a stranger to them. And so it was in many other cases of sudden yielding to him. The power of a well-modulated voice, toned softly and kindly, has often been described in the biographies of men whose eloquence congregations could scarcely resist.

Let me try to picture Jesus as I see him speaking to these people. He stands easily erect on two feet, showing no physical strain. There is a benign tone to his voice, which is heard distinctly to the end of the sentence. He uses no unnecessary emphasis. His face expresses calm sincerity, and his eyes glow with sympathy. He does not shuffle from one foot to another or make dramatic gestures. In delivery he resorts to no elocutionary artifice. Thus, with posture, voice, and face he conveys a surety of grasp of his subject. It is marvelous what can be done to affect a crowd by relying solely upon natural gifts of speech and demeanor. This I know is quite inadequate for a portrayal of all I imagine of the powers that he possessed. However, there are subtleties that cannot be described, which go far to enhance the powers of tone and appearance.

It is scarcely possible to account for the willingness of the people to hear him during the first half of his discourse. They were in sore distress, many of them were gravely ill and perhaps all of them were hungry. Here he had no bread to offer them—no bread to satisfy their physical needs. Neither did he offer them a stone. At least we may say that the attitude of the crowd is sufficient to assure us that his words were enough for them.

One of the many difficulties encountered by the scholars of nearly all schools is that of determining, in the narrations of Mark and Matthew, where certain events took place. In the Second Gospel we are told of Jesus' entrance into Capernaum, where he spoke in the synagogue. Afterwards he joined a gathering of publicans and sinners. This action affronted the Pharisees. Later, when the disciples plucked ears of corn on the sabbath in a corn field, the Pharisees asked why they did such a thing for it was not lawful on the sabbath. The reply was: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

This pronouncement proved that he was not a ritualist. After this, he entered again into the synagogue. As no other place is mentioned, we take it that it was the one in Capernaum.

After another miracle, the Pharisees took counsel with the Herodians "against him, how they might destroy him" (3:6). It is here we may mark with some surety the beginning of the plan that was laid to trap him, and it may be inferred that the Pharisees, shocked at his conduct, connived with the Herodians for his undoing. This marks one of the most important actions taken by his enemies before he left Galilee for the final days of his life.

In the narrative told by Mark he is still in Galilee or its immediate neighborhood. We learn: "Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea" (3:7). How long after the visit to Capernaum the news spread in so many directions we cannot imagine. When we think of people from Judea, in such numbers, walking up to the lake, we pause, and we wonder again whether it was the reports of his teaching (not preaching) or the sensation of the miracles that had reached as far as Jerusalem. The rapidity with which people in far-off places (far-off for the crowds who walked), learned about him and decided to leave their homes for several days—if not weeks—to see him, amazes us.

Mark records the effect he had upon some of the people. There were those who thought he was "beside himself," not because of his teaching but because he cast out devils. The scribes who came from Jerusalem denounced him. His reply to them foreshadows the fate of Israel. He said, "How can Satan cast out Satan?"

> And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.
>
> And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand (3:23-25).

No house in history, before this time, was so divided against itself as that of Israel.

Then an incident occurred which has merited much attention from the critics. The disciples brought his mother and brothers to him and said:

"Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee" (3:32). His reply was:

> . . . Who is my mother, or my brethren?
> And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!
> For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother (3:33-35).

Here is a revelation of his ignorance of his reputed birth. It is plain from this that his mother did not tell him of his supernatural birth. It also supports the idea that Peter did not know about it, which may be one reason why the virgin birth is omitted in Mark.

From the reading of the Old Testament stories we know the use that has been made of spies. So we need not be surprised that it was during this period in Galilee (not Judea) that the Pharisees and Herodians determined to have him watched, and his sayings reported to them. Matthew tells us:

> At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,
> And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him (Matt. 14:1-2).

Here it is important that we consider the economic condition of Galilee and what she had suffered under the tax levies, in addition to the enormous tribute imposed upon the land. The whole country was torn with dissension, save perhaps in the poorest peasant districts, where there was not much to supply the tetrarch's treasury or the imperial coffers.

This condition was the reason behind the campaign of Judas the Gaulonite. The cause of an insurrection does not die with the defeat of the rebels. If the injustice has not been removed, it lives, and we may be sure that the authorities are always on the alert for a recurrence of the trouble. Therefore, there would have been no difficulty at all for the Pharisees and Herodians to gain the help of the tetrarch to provide a spy to have Jesus marked.

I hold that the plan of the Pharisees and the Herodians was not for the purpose of putting a stop to a sorcerer, as he was called, or a wonder-worker —for these were not crimes. It had for its object quite another purpose, which was to detect him as a sympathizer with Judas the Gaulonite or an opponent of imperial rule. One or the other would do for drastic action. But the charge had to be specific, clear evidence of sedition.

Now what type of man would be selected for such a task? A Roman soldier in uniform would not do. He would attract attention at once, and unless an Israelite in the army was chosen to follow in plain clothes, it would be hard to find in the retinue of the tetrarch men who knew Aramaic thoroughly. Knowledge of the language was absolutely necessary for the work. In our attempt to reconstruct from the evidence contained in the Gospel the plan of the Pharisees and the Herodians to trap him, we may imagine, for the nonce, that an Aramaic-speaking Israelite was selected.

We know that during the campaigns of Alexander, invading armies were recruited in Galilee and Judea. Disaffected Israelites joined up with the forces. Some of the scholars have pointed out this not unusual practice in pre-Christian days. Galilee had the reputation of breeding brave fighting men.

Whether or not we have transgressed the rules of legitimate criticism of New Testament stories will be shown as we follow the narrative to its conclusion at Golgotha. The important point to consider is that someone—not a disciple or even a sympathizer—made notes of the journeys and the speeches. They were preserved by the spy who would collect and report only that information which would make Jesus liable to arrest.

CHAPTER VI

THE WRITING OF MARK'S GOSPEL

The problem of who wrote each of the four Gospels will engage the minds of higher critics for long generations to come. The libraries of books on this subject, which have been formed during the past two generations, would occupy many shelves. To say that only conjectures abound is to put it mildly, at best. It would be an arduous task to select three or four of them for a review of different opinions held by eminent scholars, for they agree to disagree. They quote not only from one another, but also from the pseudo-historians of the time of Constantine the Great and before. Irenaeus and Eusebius are quasi-authorities whose opinions we sometimes tire of reading.

One of the troubles is attributing to simple-minded disciples, who associated with Jesus in his mission, long memories and the gift of many tongues. In some instances the age reached by the eleven after the crucifixion is overlooked. Suppose some of them were much younger than Jesus (and this is a supposition that is rarely considered by our authors), let us say that two or three were about twenty at the time Jesus called Peter and his brother from their fishing nets. To imagine that these juniors would live a hundred years is stretching a point in longevity, for the period of great ages in biblical literature was long past before the Romans occupied Palestine. We know of not one of the disciples who survived to a great age, and in this matter it is just as well if we consider only those who were with Jesus until the time of the crucifixion, and not the apostles who came after, even including Paul himself.

The reason why this is one of the necessary starting points in our quest for the authors of the first two Gospels is that the source, which the higher critics regard as more or less authoritative for the Second Gospel attributed to Mark, is Papias, and he certainly lived to the year A.D. 150. It is true that he says he received his information from the Elder, who is considered by some to be John the Apostle; others exclude John the disciple, son of Zebedee, as the informant.

It is conceded now by the higher critics that the date of what we read as Mark was about the year A.D. 65, a full generation after the crucifixion, and that Peter, the disciple, told the story to Mark in Rome. It is not unlikely that a man of sixty-five or thereabouts would retain a vivid recollection of the stirring times from the beginning to the end of the mission. But so much had occurred in the intervening years, so much dissension by the intrusion of Paul, as we read in Acts, that the memory would be freighted with a knowledge of affairs that were in no way related to the work of Jesus. The new Gospels became necessary for the formation of the nuclei of the first churches. At first, these could not have amounted to any more than a few people in cities beyond the borders of Palestine, who were obsessed with the idea that the old world was passing away and that the new one was about to take its place.

We do not read in the Gospels that any of these groups resided in Judea, Samaria, or Galilee. Indeed, we learn in Acts 11:26 that the first one appeared in Antioch and the members of it were nicknamed "Christians." It seems to have been an urban movement, far away from the villages and small towns in and about which the mission of Jesus was carried.

The source of our knowledge concerning the authorship of the Second Gospel is Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis, in whose See was the town of Ephesus. The works of more than a dozen eminent higher critics quote conjectures and interpretations concerning the statements made by Papias in the *Oracles*. Fragments of these were the source of the account given by Eusebius, but the original documents that came from the mind of Papias were lost.

For a clear, plausible analysis of the Papias-Eusebius account, I cannot do better than refer to the work written by Canon B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*. Published thirty years ago, at the time it caused something of a sensation in church circles. Canon Streeter was Reader in Christian Origins in the University of Oxford and Fellow of the Queen's College. The positions that he held give evidence of his scholarship. A few years after he wrote the above work, he published *The Primitive Church* (1929). These two books have in no way suffered from the criticism of authors who have written during the past twenty years. Indeed, his account of the Papias-Eusebius story of the authorship of the Second Gospel is about the most acceptable one I can present to the reader. Canon Streeter says:

> Eusebius, the father of Church History, *c.* 325, had a fortunate habit of quoting his authorities verbatim; and, as we can check his accuracy by those which still survive, we can trust it in regard to those which do not. Among these are two passages from Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, ten miles from Laodicea, of the "seven churches of Asia." As to the date at which Papias wrote his *Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord*, from which Eusebius quotes, there has been much dispute; but the limits on either side would seem to be 135 and 165. It runs as follows:
>
> > "And the Elder said this also: Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without however recording in order what was either said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him, but afterwards as I said (attended) Peter who adapted his instructions to the need (of his hearers) but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's oracles. So then Mark made no mistake while he thus wrote down some things as he remembered them; for he made

> it his one care not to omit anything that he heard or to set down any false statement therein" (Eus. *H.E.* iii. 39).
>
> From the context in Eusebius it would appear that the Elder spoken of was the Elder John. . . .[1]

The question that this raises, at first glance, concerns the age of both Papias and the Elder John. The dates given to Papias when he wrote the *Oracles*—the earliest 135 and the latest 165—open at a period one hundred years after the crucifixion, and it is not at all likely that any of the disciples of Jesus lived to that age. Who the Elder John really was is a matter of conjecture, for no one I have read would even place him among the apostles who came after the crucifixion. Many questions arise concerning the statement of Papias: one, in particular, is the age of Peter when he informed the Elder that, while in Rome, he dictated what he remembered about Jesus, and gave it to his interpreter, Mark.

Let us, then, suppose that Peter (frequently referred to as "the old disciple") had reached the age of forty when Jesus called him. The earliest date for Mark is A.D. 65, so Peter then would have been about three score and fifteen. From the year A.D. 65 to the earliest time of Papias adds another seventy years; and for a man (whether he was a disciple or an apostle) to live one hundred years in those times of bitter controversial storm and stress is not at all likely.

Suppose that Mark was some years younger than Peter. He, too, would have had to have lived to a ripe old age to tell his story to the Elder John. The age question is one that should be considered in weighing the statement of Papias, as it is given by Eusebius. Some doubt his reliability as a historian, and there is much reason for this.

The age problem of the disciples and the apostles is only one of many we encounter in the story about the origin of the Second Gospel. For a thorough investigation of this unsettled question, which has been a problem of much discussion for many years, I would advise the reader to study the article in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*.[2] In this matter the critics have reached no tenable decision. And the question of who the Presbyter was, that is, the Elder referred to by Papias, is still an open discussion.

The importance of this may be grasped when we make inquiries about the plausibility of Peter ever being in Rome. Loisy and others utterly reject the idea. It seems to many that a simple fisherman would be out of his element in such a place. Peter's life was spent in the villages of Galilee and Judea. The only city of any importance he visited, according to the Gospels and Acts, apart from Rome, was Jerusalem in Passover week, the last one that Jesus spent on earth.

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[1] Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, London, Macmillan, 1927, pp. 17-8.

[2] "John Son of Zebedee," written by Paul W. Schmiedel, Prof. of New Testament Exegesis, Zurich, *Ency. Bib.*, II, sec. 3-7, pp. 2506-12.

Therefore, I think it is necessary, before we go deeply into the narratives of the life of Jesus, as they are set down in the first two Gospels, to push the investigation of this notion further. We should like to know why he went to Rome. Canon Streeter has dealt with this affair in a persuasive manner. Before discussing Streeter's views, we might ask when Peter went to Rome. There is no suggestion in the Gospels or Epistles that Peter visited Rome before Paul went there. Paul's journeys from capital to capital have been traced and mapped with some precision. In some instances we know how he got from place to place, but there is not a scrap of information that can be found in the New Testament of how Peter got to Rome.

Even if Peter were at Antioch (Galatians 2:11) when he received a call from the Christians in Rome, it would be a hazardous adventure for him to make his way there. Paul lets us know that it was no easy matter for him to reach his destinations.

Whether Peter was in Rome or not, there is little doubt that Paul was there. Whether the apostle relented when he departed from Barnabas and considered that Mark would be of use to him, no one informs us. It is strange we learn from the Gospel scholars so little about the fire that consumed the greater part of what was called Rome. Is it a mere coincidence that the date given for the Gospel of Mark is A.D. 64 or thereabouts? The fire began in Rome in July 64 and burned for six days, when it was quenched; but after a time it started again and burned furiously. Is it fair to ask what became of the first Christian community there and the records that it would have received from the missioners of Paul? These are a few of the questions that occur to the serious student.

It is scarcely believable that Peter and Paul were in Rome at the same time, for we are safe in assuming that the body of Christians in Rome, who welcomed Paul, were not divided at that time and did not comprise a large congregation. It is here that the language question posits a big problem. It is conceivable that Paul might have spoken some Greek and Latin. His connection by birth with Tarsus, one of the great university centers of the known world, where students flocked from all parts, and his long stay there of eight or nine years, after leaving Judea, are sufficient to convince us that he had time to become fluent in Greek and Latin.

But where would Peter learn these tongues? He spoke nothing but Aramaic, and surely it is stretching a point to imagine that there was a body of Galileans or even Judean Jews in Rome when Paul went there. Streeter suggests that the belief was current before A.D. 110[3] that Mark had been summoned to Rome by Paul (2 Timothy 4:11) and that Peter and Mark were in Rome together "just before the date which internal evidence suggests as probably that of the composition of the Gospel."

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[3] *The Four Gospels*, p. 490.

Papias designates Mark as an "interpreter," and from this we gather he translated the speech of Peter, into what?—Latin or Greek? Here again the language problem confronts us, and we wonder who the Christians were in Rome at that time who were conversant with Greek. The language of the people there would be Latin, if the first community was composed of Roman converts. But this seems scarcely possible for the Gospel according to Mark was *taken* there. The Romans did not go to Tarsus or Antioch to learn it. It is a bewildering task to make sense of this visit of Peter to Rome.

In a work whose title escapes me, I read a rather plausible explanation of how the first group of Christians came to be formed in Rome. The author said it was quite possible, after the invasion of Palestine by Pompey, that many Galileans had been taken captive and transported to Rome; that the conquerors in this case did what they had done in others, notably during Caesar's campaigns in Gaul and Britain. But such an idea only makes the difficulty greater and does not help in any way to solve the language problem.

Whether the Second Gospel was dictated in Aramaic and directly translated into Greek by Mark in Rome or elsewhere is not the most important matter, although it is one that still exercises the minds of some of the critics. What *is* of superlative importance in this case is the introduction into Mark of matter that was not considered by Peter and the disciples until after the crucifixion. There are insertions which are obviously Pauline.

This is one of the perplexing problems that has disturbed the minds of the higher critics who have devoted themselves almost entirely to the Gospels. Guignebert, Loisy, Streeter and Klausner are four, of different schools, who have treated this subject at great length. Perhaps the most comprehensive survey of the beginnings of the Christian community in Rome will be found in Klausner's work, *From Jesus to Paul*. He covers the widest field of any of the commentators, but if the reader turns to him for instruction, I would advise him to read on when he meets with contradiction after contradiction. Some of these I shall point out later. Here it is necessary to warn the reader that some of them arise from the rather vague way in which he deals with them. In many we are not sure whether he is giving his own opinion or that of critics he quotes. It is surprising to find in Klausner's work the idea put forward that Nazarenes could converse in Hebrew. This accomplishment he attributes to their reading of the Septuagint. But how are we to reconcile this notion with the firm belief expressed by him and others that Hebrew had long since ceased to be a spoken language? He laid it down in his first work on Jesus, that in Galilee Torah was read in Hebrew and then had to be translated to the gathering in the synagogues into Aramaic, the popular speech of the people.

It is not clear what is to be gained by suggesting that Peter spoke either Latin or Greek. If he spoke the latter and could write it, why should he require an interpreter? The deeper one goes into this controversy, as we find it expressed in fully a dozen works published in this generation, the more complicated it becomes for the reader who seeks enlightenment. Still, this fact remains after the long quest: that one does not tire of the diversity of views, for in this case problems seem to beget problems.

There was an important community of Jews in Rome long before Jesus was born. Klausner cites the authority for this.[4] But he confuses the reader by mentioning in almost the same sentence that there was a community in Rome of Nazarenes. This surely could not have been until long after the crucifixion.

The fact that Cicero and others mention the community of Jews in Rome is not strange to the reader who has familiarized himself with the activities of Jews in the cities of the Euphrates and the Tigris after the dispersion. Several authors treat at some length the vocations to which they devoted themselves. Many, it is assumed, became merchants and money lenders. Hence, we can easily imagine the invasion of the cities of the west by these Jews and their settlement in Rome, long before the conquest of Pompey. Their genius in the everyday functions of the marts would commend them readily to those who conducted the principal trades of the city.

But were the early Jews in Rome Galileans speaking Aramaic? We ask this question because we do not find anywhere Jew or Gentile of that province becoming a notable man in politics or commerce. It may be they were Judeans, for there is no doubt that those of the dispersion who succeeded in entering the commercial fields were Judeans.

Paul, in the Epistles, makes it clear that the old Jewish community and the Nazarenes were separate groups, and they had important differences of ritual. In Acts, also, we learn that when Paul preached for a whole day there, ''Some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.'' Klausner writes, ''It would appear that the number of those believing was very small, while the great majority did not believe and even disputed with the handful of believers. Finally, all of them turned and went off, each his own way.''[5]

In all this we wish for more information about Peter and his activities. Klausner states that the elder disciple was in Rome only two years, and that was at a time of stress and turmoil. Whether he was in Rome or Antioch, in no way explains why, in dictating to Mark, he omitted so much that we find in Matthew and in Luke. It seems clear that Peter's mind was more occupied with the new religion (and its beginning in groups which they called churches) than it was with a history of the life of Jesus as the prophet of Nazareth.

We have now reached the point in this history when we must pause for a while to consider deeply the problem of the language spoken by Jesus and his disciples. There is more confusion today set out in the recent opinions of the Gospel critics than there was at any other time. Indeed, it threatens to become a heated debate that will lead to no conclusion, for it is based upon evidence that cannot stand close examination. It has arisen from the Greek translations of Matthew and Mark, as we have them in the King James and the Douay versions. In this matter, some of the critics avoid dealing with the specific purpose of the works. They were intended for the Gentiles, for Hellenized Jews, and perhaps for the descendants of those Jews taken captive to Rome during Pompey's campaigns.

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[4] *From Jesus to Paul*, p. 414.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 416.

Now this term ''Hellenized'' has acted like a drug upon the minds of some of the Gospel critics. They do not seem to understand that there was a limit to the spread of a culture that was called Greek. No one tries to explain how commerce and education carried it into the villages of Galilee. What trade would there be for a Greek merchant in Nazareth? It seems to me far more reasonable to place the limit of the spread of Hellenism in the cities, where consumers of Greek and other foreign wares were to be found. It is admitted by the critics that the affluent were in the cities, and that they were by far the best educated of its denizens. That is readily understood.

I do not find any difficulty at all in resolving this problem of the language spoken by Jesus and his disciples. Greek could not have been used in the familiar intercourse of the daily round. What other opportunity would they have of speaking that tongue? The four fishermen and Matthew would have little use for it. It could not have been necessary for Peter and Andrew to speak it when they sold fish to a Hellenized Jew of Capernaum. Recently I bought fish at a seaport from a salesman, a war refugee who could speak scarcely any English, and I had no difficulty in knowing the name of the fish and the price that was asked for it.

In the case of Matthew, the toll collector at the gate of the city, we know that he had only to exact the fee from strangers, people who were not residents of the town. There are more than twelve episodes in the historical part of the narratives of both Matthew and Mark that give us an opportunity of testing the language question. I shall deal with some of them.

May we ask in what tongue John the Baptist made his announcement? Did he speak in Greek when he uttered the cry, ''Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand''? Would he speak Greek to the people he called to Jordan? Would they have understood him if he had done so? This is a matter that should be settled because it does not stop there. The message was so potent that it was carried by Jesus himself and formed the very core of his mission. There is another test, supplied by the episode of Jesus telling Peter and Andrew to cast their nets away and follow him. Would he counsel them to do this in Greek? Would Galilean fishermen understand him if he had done so?

Now the question becomes more crucial when we deal with Jesus in the synagogue. Did he speak there in Greek, and then translate it into Aramaic? We know that in the synagogues of Galilee, Torah was read in the Hebrew and then translated into Aramaic. Klausner is the authority for laying this down as the rule. The further we go into this question, the more complicated it becomes. If Jesus spoke in Greek in the synagogue, how was it that the people protested against his new version of the Scriptures?

Surely the Pharisees who protested against plucking ears of corn on the sabbath did not chastise Jesus and his disciples in the Greek tongue. There are so many episodes of this order set down in Matthew and Mark that it seems inconceivable to me that anyone can make a case for Greek as the language used by Jesus and his disciples.

Perhaps the clearest evidence that Greek was not the tongue used by the disciples is given in the command that they should go out in pairs and preach the Gospel. In Matthew we read that the instruction to the disciples when Jesus sent them out was as follows:

> . . . . Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:
>
> But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10:5-6).

Here we may take it that this command excludes the Hellenized Jews who lived in the cities. The Gospel of Jesus was solely for the lost sheep of Israel, those who had been denounced for their shortcomings by all the prophets since the days of Solomon.

What was this Gospel? "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." How can anyone imagine these pairs of disciples going penniless into the villages of southern Galilee and translating this cry into Greek?

However, the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark were for another purpose. Save for the purely historic account of events and sayings, they were intended for another time and for people living far away to the north of Galilee. It was in these regions that Greek-speaking communities of poor people and serfs were to be found. Call them Hellenized, if you will, but such a term for them would have to cover some beliefs that were pagan and not easy to eradicate from their minds. The first two Gospels were for the specific purpose of giving particulars to the Gentiles.

The same questions that were asked by earnest Bible students fifty years ago remain unanswered today. It is an amazing experience to go through book after book, published within the past ten years and find little evidence of the matter being solved. One reason for this is that many of the Gospel scholars make an attempt to elucidate these problems by beginning from the Christian interpretations that are given in Matthew and Mark. It is only necessary to point out definite passages in both Gospels that reveal the work of adapting the historic matter in them to fit the demands of the small communities that had to be converted to the new faith. There is one outstanding example that reveals this clearly.

When Jesus on the road to Caesarea Philippi asked Peter who the people said he was, the disciples mentioned Elias, John the Baptist, Jeremias or one of the prophets. Jesus then asked Peter who he thought he was, and Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ" (Matt. 16:13-16 and Mark 8:27-29). Here we have an episode that took place in the life of Jesus, which introduces the Greek term for messiah. Now neither Jesus nor any of the disciples held the slightest idea that the looked-for messiah would be other than a politician of the House of David. It is probable that the term "Christ" was adapted for the needs of a local community far to the north of Galilee. Here the interval of time, so little heeded by many modern authorities, is of great importance, for the incident took place in about the first year of the mission of Jesus, and the adoption of the Greek term for messiah could not have been known to Peter until some time after Paul visited him in Jerusalem.

There are so many ways of probing deeper into the Gospel stories for the object of finding what reason there is for our scholars today to imagine that the simple Galileans could speak Greek that it would take a long tract in which to deal with most of them. Why cannot we be content with the old idea that the disciples were simple people of the lake shore and the small villages? Why try to make such folk educated men who could enter into the controversies of the Hellenists, the educated residents of the cities?

I can recommend to the earnest Bible student an essay upon "Hellenism" which, for scope, depth and concise statement, goes to the very heart of this matter. He will find it in Robert Pfeiffer's *History of New Testament Times*. In that essay the author sums up the evidence to be gathered concerning the language problem, and he says:

> . . . Hellenism prevailed only in the cities and chiefly among the upper classes of the native populations. The countryside, where rural folk retained their old languages and customs, was scarcely affected by Hellenism.[6]

After a wide and thorough examination of the scholars who have dealt with the language problem, I can find no helpful reason put forth why Jesus and the disciples spoke any other language during the mission than Aramaic, and that tongue must have been the basic one for the first Greek translation from which the evangelists gave us the Gospels. From the time of Wellhausen down to this year, there have been many conflicting ideas given to students, and they are no less bewildering now than they were at any time. Indeed, it may be said that the student can find so many different opinions that he would turn from them confused and unable to come to any helpful conclusion.

[6] *Loc. cit.*, p. 96.

CHAPTER VII

THE BACKGROUND OF THE MISSION

A study of the life of Jesus is incomplete unless some attempt is made to furnish a background for him and his family. The evangelists who put together the stories of Matthew and Mark present him at about the age of thirty, when his mission began. It is true they mention two or three episodes of his childhood and youth, but the scholars are not in agreement by any means about the value of these records. The great stumbling block to a proper understanding of the man of Nazareth is the desire of the first writers to give proof of the fulfillment of the prophecies. It is curious that we should know more about the life of Socrates than we do about that of Jesus.

The New Testament historians who, since the days of Renan and Strauss, have given us interesting works upon the Gospel narratives considered that there were two or more reasons why we know so little. The chief one seems to be the desire of his apostles, who came after Peter and Paul had passed away, to present to the Gentiles a heaven-sent Savior who died for sinners. (This is putting it briefly.) There is yet another reason which perhaps carries more weight than the first: to dissociate him from rabbinical hope of a messiah, in the Jewish sense of the term.

In pondering these matters, it is well for us to remember that the date of the first Gospel—Mark—was not earlier than the year A.D. 65. Matthew used the material he found in Mark, elaborated it, and gave to Jesus a lineage reaching back to Jesse, the father of David. That may be the reason why Matthew in the New Testament is placed before Mark. The first chapter in Matthew begins: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham . . ." (Douay).

Mark's beginning is a modest, straightforward one. The first two verses are: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God. As it is written in Isaias the prophet, Behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare the way before thee" (Douay).

It is not surprising that different writers should adopt different methods of presenting such a character as Jesus. It was no different with authors in the days of the Roman empire than it is today. Each has his own way of telling a story, and those of us who have read some of the works on evidence given by witnesses in court know how the stories vary and how difficult it is very often to believe what is elicited under examination. The Gospels are full of problems of this order. Two witnesses of an event differ in their descriptions of it. The confusions that arise when we compare evidence of when and where an incident took place abound in the various books.

All this signifies to me that we are dealing with the most extraordinary person that ever lived; one whose name has survived all the controversies of Jew and Gentile and is today by far the most important figure for scholars to study that the world has ever known. I could count thirty books upon his life that have been published in the last ten years. Where else should we look for a man of such enduring fame?

Surely it is worth while to learn a little more—even if we have to stretch our imagination—about one whose name is spoken more often than that of any person who ever lived on this earth. He has been called the Galilean, sometimes the Nazarene. But we search in vain for a precise knowledge of what these terms signify. Joseph Klausner, in his *Jesus of Nazareth*, is one of the few who attempts to give us a background and describe to us some particulars of the people of Galilee.

There is no character in the Old Testament that can be compared with Jesus. Even in the short accounts we have of him, as we find them in Mark and Matthew, he stands out as a rare individual, unique in personality, incomparable in all his ways. His ideas, his thought and speech, his manner and kindliness touch our hearts and win our love for him. He was possessed of a courage that was his alone; for he undertook a mission that could end only in death.

Who was he? From what stock did he come? He was no Judean. There is no trace of ritualism in any of his sayings or acts that reveal rabbinical training. He was a Jew, but what type of Jew? Were the Galileans the people from whom he sprang?

It is doubtful that Jesus knew Hebrew. Until recently most of the critics agreed that he spoke one language only, and that was Aramaic. It is the language problem in his case, which is one of the determining factors that leads to a proper understanding of himself and his mission.

Klausner is supported by other Jewish scholars in his statement: "Jesus was not a philosopher who devised a new theoretical system of thought."[1] It has been suggested by the critics that many of the sayings were household maxims in Jewish families long before Jesus was born:

> . . . Like the Hebrew Prophets, and like the Jewish sages from *Talmud* times till the close of the Spanish period, he put forward religious and ethical ideas which closely concerned the conduct of ordinary, daily life; and he did this whenever the occasion warranted it. . . . Only rarely did he practise instruction for instruction's sake. . . . There existed, prior to the Gospel of Matthew, a collection of sayings (*Logia*) which this Gospel transmits, in longer or shorter selections, as items of independent interest (*e.g.*, the Sermon on the Mount, and the harangue against the Pharisees).[2]

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[1] *Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. by Herbert Danby, D.D., New York, Macmillan, 1929, p. 361.

[2] *Ibid.*

However that may be, one cannot doubt that Jesus took them and transmuted them into his own simple speech.

Klausner concedes that "the main strength of Jesus lay in his ethical teaching,"[3] but continues, later, "There are ethical sayings attributed to Jesus which recur word for word in *Talmud* or *Midrash*."[4] There can be no doubt about the homogeneity of the thought. All the utterances hang together in a coherence that reveals a rhetorical flow from one mind. It is all Jesus, and no one else could have spoken these jewels of spiritual life. I think the beatitudes, the precepts, and the Sermon itself, which deals with the economic conditions of the people, are too big, too comprehensive to have been delivered in one discourse. They cover such a wide field of spiritual and economic law that their themes might perhaps have been contained in three or four separate sermons delivered at short intervals.

He was a prophet who announced in clear terms the purpose of his mission. In Matthew (but not in Mark at all) we read: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (5:17).

Here the well-instructed Jew puts himself in close touch with his hearers. We wonder whether the father of Jesus could have given him the necessary training. I refer to his knowledge of Torah, the Law, and the Pentateuch. It is not readily seen by the students who read the Gospels in the order of the New Testament that, scattered through all the books, there are many examples of his knowledge of the Mosaic Law. It is when we have searched for these and put them together that we decide for ourselves that he was a true Jew of the old tradition.

For this we must give full credit to his father. As a boy and a youth—even if Jesus attended occasional services at the synagogue—he could not have learned so thoroughly the Law and the interpretation of it. Hearthside instruction of the young is the best that can be given when it comes from the mind of a devout believer.

The examples that we have of rabbinical discourse and dialectic are not for the meek and humble. Indeed, the more we seek for enlightenment in the early work of Jewish writers and compilers, the less satisfactory is the knowledge that we gain toward an understanding of the Gospels.

The Law that Jesus came to fulfill is not embodied in one statute. In this respect the commandments are rather deceptive, in the sense of being a complete set of provisions of duty. The student must devote much time to searching through the five books of Torah to lay hold of other laws considered just as essential as those of the Decalogue. Besides the commandments, "Thou shalt," we have those of "Thou shalt not." For instance, one of the fundamentals of Torah, not included in the ten, is referred to by all the prophets: "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark" (Deut. 19:14). As a duty, this is also emphasized strongly in the verse that says: "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark" (27:17).

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 381.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 385.

The world of research is an arduous one, as I know, having spent many years in tracing clues in various books, for the reasons for the stern admonitions of the prophets and for reasons why the land that was to be a kingdom of priests, "wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness," suffered every economic woe that can be visited upon a people. I have not space to mention all the references to what happened when the landmark was removed. But let those suffice in Hosea and in Job, as well as the references to the restoration of economic right, which came at the time of Nehemiah and Ezra. I can assure the reader that he will be convinced that the decline of the political kingdoms of Jewry may be attributed to the economic woe described by the prophets.

The announcement of Jesus about fulfilling the Law is illuminated by the promise of the preceding verse: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). This is a proem of his aim and purpose.

The astounding hope that was given to the poor and needy, and the simplicity of the instruction are the corollaries of fulfilling the Law. The people he spoke to had a light within them that would shine; and, under a just system, even we can perform works that will glorify God. Indeed, I cannot understand why there should be any doubt of this. The skeptic is put to rout when the subject is discussed with him, for when it is reduced to economic terms, he has to be convinced that under a system of justice, in which the producer has the right to his product, the basis will be laid for an equitable distribution of wealth.

Thus, the idea that is the very core of Torah is: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

There is much difference of opinion expressed by the Bible scholars upon these two verses (Matt. 5:16-17). Some of them seem to be under the impression that they refer to two different laws and that the first verse should be considered separately from the one that follows about fulfilling the Law. The emphasis that is laid upon the word *works* should convince us that, if the Law were fulfilled, it would be possible to enjoy the promise of glorifying the heavenly Father. And it should be remembered that the new religion that came in with Paul chose faith instead of works as the guiding principle of the new church congregations. As one has put it, *works* is the Jewish command, and *faith* that of the Gentiles (or at least the apostle Paul, no matter how during its growth and development the church has tried to combine the two). Indeed, Christ was for the Gentiles what Jesus was for the Jews.

One of the most instructive, analytical reviews of this matter is given by Charles Guignebert in *Jesus*. He devotes several pages to a reasoned discussion of verse 17. He says:

> The only interpretation of which this passage, at first sight, seems capable, is that the Law and the prophets are, and remain, the foundation of righteousness in the eyes of God. Only by fulfilling their commandments is it possible to gain a place in the Kingdom, and the more exact the fulfilment of the precepts, the better the place. . . .[5]

There ought to be no controversy about associating verse 16 with the following one. Works cannot be divorced from the Law. And if we turn to the book attributed to James, the "brother of Jesus," we shall see that he and other disciples held firmly to the promise announced by Jesus. For in chapter 2 we read:

> What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him . . . ?
>
> Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.
>
> Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. . . .
>
> But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead . . . ?
>
> Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only (Vss. 14, 17-18, 20, 24).

How this extraordinary book came to be included in the canon of the church is a mystery, for all that is expressed in its chapters is contrary to the doctrines laid down in the Epistles of Paul. For example, consider the following:

> But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed (James 1:25).

To fulfill the law that will make it possible for men to know the perfect law of liberty was the essential of the mission of Jesus.

It is imperative that we note carefully the proclamation made by John when he baptized Jesus in Jordan. The version in Matthew is: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (3:2). Mark omits this. In neither of the first two Gospels is there any reference to a messiah. There is not one that would appeal to the Jewish mind nor yet one that became the Pauline interpretation of it. The "kingdom of heaven" could not possibly mean the kingdom of David. Indeed, in neither version do we gather the slightest idea of a political change. There is nothing of legislative expediency or tinkerings with the economic system. That the crowds that came to Jordan lacked bread, no one can doubt from a knowledge of the conditions which then prevailed in Palestine. The Roman occupiers and the landlords took the milk and honey. The people were reduced to a sad plight of penury. Yet, they no doubt longed for a protestant messiah, a stem of the house of David, who would bring immediate relief to their need. What they thought about the kingdom of heaven is nowhere expressed by the evangelists.

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[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 305.

It is something more than a coincidence that Jesus, coming from Galilee to be baptized by John, has the same idea of the essential change that should take place as the Baptist had. The proclamations may be summed up in the three words I gave to the men of the Brotherhood meetings over fifty years ago: "Repent, Renounce, Redeem."

If, at this point, we do not have a clear conception of the proclamations of John and Jesus, we shall find ourselves, as we proceed, led into many confusions of idea, and contradictions, which will balk the inquiry we are now engaged upon. No messiah, either political or mystical, is promised. However, this does not preclude the hope in the minds of the people that the "kingdom of heaven" (or, as Jesus expressed it more clearly, "the kingdom of God") meant the kingdom of Israel under a messiah.

As we pursue this examination, we shall see that the cause of the failure of the mission was this very opposite notion of a political messiah long in the minds of the people. We do not even know to what extent they repented.

CHAPTER VIII

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

After a journey "into the country of the Gadarenes" Jesus returned to Galilee. On the sabbath he taught in the synagogue, and the people marveled at what they heard, and they asked:

> Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him (Mark 6:3).

Here we meet with opposition from an unexpected quarter. Were they shocked at his revolutionary interpretation of the traditional Levite teaching? A pronouncement came from him upon their conduct, that was so personal we feel he was wounded by their perversity: "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house" (6:4).

Hence, his desire to send the twelve to teach strangers. The teaching mission of Jesus had now reached a point when it was necessary to call the disciples together and give them an apostolic mission to go into the country, two by two, to teach and heal the sick. They were also given powers by Jesus to work miracles.

Now who were the twelve? There is much difference of opinion about those that should be included in the first group of disciples. The critics, however, agree that all but one were Galileans. The exception was Judas Iscariot, one of the most mysterious characters associated with the mission. There have been so many different views expressed as to who he was, where he came from, and what his particular office was that he will remain in men's minds not as a disciple but as the betrayer of Jesus. If, as some of the experts have suggested, he came from near Jerusalem, it is hard to account for his presence in Galilee. However, this matter does not yet assume the significance it will bear when we have to deal with the last days.

The disciples were advised before they started on their mission "that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse" (6:8). This instruction meant that they would depend entirely upon hospitality for subsistence.

In another collision with the Pharisees (7:1) we have an instance of his repudiation of mere ritual. The disciplinarians objected to the disciples eating bread with unwashed hands, and complained that they were not particular about the cleanliness of their pots and pans. This has the stamp of reality about it; it reads as if it happened. Jesus was equal to the occasion:

> For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.
>
> . . . Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition (7:8-9).

The incident in itself may not seem of much importance, but it shows clearly that he was watched closely by the Pharisees. Perhaps by this time an emissary of Herod mingled with the crowds about him and took note of what he said. This would not be difficult to accomplish if we can accept the statement of the numbers that gathered about him whenever he appeared to teach.

After many wanderings east and west of the lake, he came to Dalmanutha, in Galilee, and here the Pharisees accosted him again and asked for a sign. Jesus replied: "Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation" (8:12).

The import of his answer will be plain when we deal with his conception of the kingdom of God. By this time Jesus was conscious that he was being tracked. Such a sensitive being would feel that he was a marked man because of the close observance of the Pharisees. Intuitively he knew why they questioned him. His apprehension of their scheme, however, did not deter him from proceeding with his mission. They might ask for signs, might criticize the uncleanliness of his disciples, and protest against his breaking their ritualistic laws, but he perhaps considered these as mere pretexts for engaging him in debate about the lawfulness of paying tribute to Herod and the Romans.

Chapter 8 of the Gospel of Mark contains sayings and events that are of the utmost importance to our understanding of the crisis in the mission. That Jesus knew the perils of his work is made plain in the warning he gave to his disciples. He said to them: "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod" (8:15).

There may be a play on words in the original, but it is evident from the reply of the disciples that they were not thinking of the food Jesus had been giving to them. No doubt their means were scarce and, perhaps because of the work of the Pharisees, hospitality was not easily obtained. Even the most fervent of disciples requires food for the body. Jesus, however, chastised them for lacking the spiritual food he had tried to teach them. He said to them:

> . . . Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?
>
> Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember . . . ?
>
> And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand (8:17-18, 21)?

Some years ago the opinion concerning this admonishment of their intelligence was that it would never do to picture his disciples, at this advanced stage of the mission, as men who were dull of comprehension. Yet, with the exception of Matthew, they were illiterate peasants. What they knew of Torah and the Prophets would have been committed to them orally. Although the services held in the synagogues were in the Hebrew tongue, in Galilee they had to be translated into Aramaic, the speech of the people.

The issue arose from a conflict of ideas: they were looking for a leader, one long expected to restore all that was promised when they were to settle in a land of milk and honey and eat bread without scarceness. Since these desirable necessaries of existence were not forthcoming, they became perplexed and began to have doubts regarding the fruits of the mission they looked for when they joined him. The disciples were human creatures, and there was not one ready to imitate the ascetic existence of the Baptist, who lived in the desert, and fed on locusts and wild honey. Later on we shall have many instances to substantiate this idea of the disciples.

After a visit to Bethsaida, Jesus and the twelve went to the north, towards Caesarea Philippi. One of the critics is of the opinion that they would not dare to enter the city, but they must have spoken in the small towns and villages round about. On all counts it does seem to have been imprudent to go so near the claws of his enemies. On the way he asked his disciples who the people thought he was (8:27), and they told him that some thought he was Elias; others John the Baptist, or one of the prophets.

Then came the question that brought an answer, which changed the whole aim of the original mission, which was to bring the kingdom of God on earth. Jesus asked, "But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ" (8:29). Even at that early time the Greek word had quite another meaning than the word messiah. When Jesus heard this from Peter, he urged them "that they should tell no man of him" (8:30).

Some of our scholarly theologians have misconstrued the advice given to the disciples. They take it that Jesus accepted the title given to him by Peter, but that the time had not come for it to be noised abroad. Undoubtedly he knew the history of other messiahs and that, in all probability, the followers of Judas the Gaulonite regarded him as one. But further on we shall see that Jesus repudiated the ideas that Peter had of the messiah.

There is an interpolation here that could not possibly have been in the original of Mark's Gospel. It is an insertion of ideas so Pauline in their character that some of the critics say that at the time they were spoken, no one in Palestine could have held them. Verse 31 is obviously placed to break the continuity of the discussion about the opinion of the disciples. So (to resume the discussion in its intended order) Peter rebukes him for not accepting the title in verse 29. But Jesus "rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men" (8:33).

Probably because he remembered the fate of John the Baptist, Jesus said that he would suffer and "be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes," and that if he were brought to trial, he would be killed. All that he had said up to this time about the increasing peril of his conflict with the Pharisees and the Herodians goes far to prove that he knew he was in jeopardy. It is the last section of the verse (8:31) that is not in keeping with the ideas of the time, and certainly Jesus himself would harbor no such thought that he would "rise again" from the dead. He might revive someone in a coma or in a trance, but it is quite another matter to bring life back after it has departed from the body.

According to Klausner, the term "Son of Man" was misunderstood by some of the scholars of a generation ago as well as by some of the clergy of the present day. He tells us that " 'Son of Man' signifies mere 'man.' " Then in some illuminating passages he gives us a little of the history of the term. I shall take the liberty of giving the gist of what he says, which will be found in his masterly study, *Jesus of Nazareth* (pp. 256-7).

"Son of man" was considered, from early times, to be a title of the King-Messiah, as it was used in the Book of Daniel and in the Book of Enoch. Jesus used the phrase (or word, in Aramaic) frequently in the sense of speaking about himself in the third person, rather than using "I." Klausner tells us that it occurs eighty-one times in the Gospels.

For the ordinary hearers it had no exceptional meaning in Aramaic, but for the more enlightened ones, it had an added significance. In this way Jesus was able to convey a double meaning, by first hinting that he was a simple, ordinary man (which is the use in everyday Aramaic speech) and also hinting his messiahship in the meaning in which it was used by Ezekiel. This method of speech had the dual effect of preparing his disciples for his messianic claims, while not having any extraordinary effect upon the mass of his hearers, who accepted him as a "Galilean itinerant."

The incident of the rich young man who came running to Jesus and called him "Good Master" (10:17) is so characteristic of the attitude of mind Jesus held toward worldly affairs that it should be remembered he told the young man that no one was good but God. In this he included himself. When asked by the young man what he should do to "inherit eternal life," Jesus told him to sell all he had and give to the poor. The advice has caused some confusion in the minds of many literal Bible readers, particularly those who find it hard to make both ends meet. But Jesus was not thinking of the needy so much as he was of the soul of the rich young man.

In another place he said, "For ye have the poor with you always" (Mark 14:7). This referred to the conditions that were prevalent about him, but did not mean that there would always be poor, that is, those who want the necessaries of existence. For under a system of eternal justice each would enjoy the fruits of his labor.

The journey to Jerusalem was feared by the disciples (10:32), but without mishap they made their way round about Jericho to Bethpage and Bethany. And it is here that the last stage of the world's drama began.

The history of the last days in Jerusalem and its suburbs will be dealt with later, in a chapter by itself. The chief points that we have emphasized in the story told by Mark, as given in the Douay and the King James versions, are concerned with the altercations with the Pharisees and the Herodians, and they tend to show their determination to destroy him and his mission. The trap they laid for him was skillfully devised, but he had kept clear of its teeth. Perhaps his enemies hoped he would be caught in it while he was in Galilee. They could not have imagined he would go to Jerusalem. Although they might have been taken by surprise at the demonstration of the crowd when he entered the city, the authorities would have their spies in and about to watch him.

Why he made this visit we are not told. We cannot check the question that arises, and ask ourselves if he had a definite purpose in making it. Was it only a coincidence that Jesus made his last visit to Jerusalem about the time of the Passover? The Galileans had often been rebuked by the Judeans for their neglect in observing the festivals, and it should be remembered in this regard that there might have been two Passovers missed during his mission. If the ministry lasted just over two years, there might have been three in all. The duration of the teaching period has not yet been definitely decided, for the experts are not agreed upon the time sequence. Indeed, some think it did not last two years. Perhaps in dealing with this problem, it would be prudent to put to one side the notion that Jesus paid his last visit to Jerusalem because it was the time for the Passover.

There can be no doubt about his loss of faith in his disciples. He had evidence enough to know they feared the worst. He had repudiated their idea of the messiahship. Had they deserted their homes and callings for nothing? Scarcity of food and lodging weakened their faith in him, and perhaps they began to realize that they had failed to understand the purpose of the mission.

They had debated and quarreled among themselves and had been rebuked by him. In spirit they had deserted him. Was Jesus fully conscious of this? Was he aware that he had failed and might as well put an end to it all? There was no going back. No compromise could be made. He had to face an inglorious sacrifice. He was alone.

In reading about the places visited by Jesus and the disciples, one wonders about the distance from village to village, and the time spent on the journeys.

Some of the places where Jesus spoke are only twenty or thirty miles apart, but on such a journey as that to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus must have stopped occasionally in villages to speak to the people. Time would also be taken for a meal and sometimes for rest. That they made their journeys on foot may be assumed, for in Mark and Matthew there is no mention of riding an animal until Jesus enters Bethany or Bethpage.

It will be remembered that Jesus said the Son of Man had no place to rest his head. Only two places mentioned might have provided him a bed: Capernaum and Beersheba, although the visit to this latter town is rather vague. We marvel at the endurance that was necessary to travel, day after day, distances as far apart as Nazareth and Capernaum. Jesus knew how to foot long journeys without fatigue. These must have been broken occasionally by wayside gatherings, and no doubt the hospitable peasants gave him food and rest.

One question that disturbed the Bible readers of two generations ago was that concerning food, lodging and raiment. How did Jesus and his disciples survive on these long journeys? It was useless to reply that figs, palm fruits, olives, and wild oats grew in abundance in Palestine. We know that John the Baptist survived on wild honey and locusts. Whether or not the people whom Jesus healed of different complaints paid their pennies to the treasurer of the twelve, we may be sure that, in gratitude, they would provide food and perhaps lodging. It is only the lack of information in the Gospels, concerning the way in which they lived, which has given rise to the question.

There are some very beautiful works that have been written upon Jesus as a lover of nature. Many of these books contain learned accounts of what was possible to a Galilean who loved the open and knew the fields and the gardens. However, no work that I have seen suggests that Jesus may have been a healer who was a herbalist.

We know nothing of his youth and early manhood, apart from his occupation. He was called the "carpenter's son," and as was customary in Jewish families, he learned his father's trade. There must have been long hours of meditation in the quiet of the countryside for him to have worked out his philosophy. No doubt the growing things, those that flower in hedge ditches, in fields, on mountain-sides and on the banks of brooks, taught him how to develop an idea and round it out in such a way that it could be expressed clearly in speech. He was a poet and saw in nature that she was ever at work on her madrigals and odes. He would, then, in all probability, learn the virtues of the plants he saw about him. Why should he be different from those we read of in the Old Testament who used flavors, spices, and unguents? We read in Ecclesiasticus: "I will water my garden of plants, and I will water abundantly the fruits of my meadow" (24:42, Douay).

In another verse we read of the effect of plants and trees upon the poet:

> I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus and as a cypress tree on mount Sion.
> I was exalted like a palm tree in Cades, and as a rose plant in Jericho.
> As a fair olive tree in the plains, and as a plane tree by the water in the streets, was I exalted (24:17-19, Douay).

That nature enveloped him in her robe of joyous images, no one can deny, for the parables surely tell us that in his thoughts he loved to dwell upon her riches for all to enjoy. Why should the humble house in southern Galilee lack anything that Mary and Martha had at Bethany? They had spikenard, and no doubt they had some frankincense and myrrh; cinnamon must have been used in all families. But these are only a few of the herbs that supply compounds for special occasions. There must have been many others from nature's garden that were in use.

Whether any of these medicines were carried about by Jesus in his pilgrimages is a moot point. I cannot imagine his wearing a girdle with a wallet attached for carrying remedies for the sick. But it is hard to account for the cures he made without the aid of distillations, powders and ointments. There must have been what are called household remedies for many sicknesses, limb disabilities and sore eyes. For we know that, before doctors were ever thought of, Dame Nature was the apothecary to whom man applied when he wanted aid. Nature was the chemist's first laboratory, and it still remains the principal one for the scientists today who are turning out "miracle" drugs from her sources.

To compose a portrait of Jesus would be a formidable task even for a man of unusual imagination. It would be necessary, in the first place, to visualize the benign authority which brought an immediate response from those he called to his mission. What was the force or charm that made Peter and other fishermen cast their nets aside and without question become his disciples? Such a scene and its action defy descriptive analysis. It is not sufficent to say that he called simple men who were looking for a messiah. For there have been many such who have left their imprint in the memory of the Galilean Jews. Maybe we have been too sophisticated—far too practical to give our thoughts to the spiritual wonders of some personalities who have exercised strange influences upon thousands of simple-minded people—too sophisticated to create a portrait of Jesus as he appeared to the people who saw and heard him.

Is it conceivable that an aura of love radiated from him, which in some subtle way magnetized those who were close to him? The story of Jesus is full of many strange experiences, which can only be attributed to a power of the soul's light suffusing the body and senses.

Jesus did more with faith than move mountains, and it is to faith that we must pin our desire to learn the secret of his magical qualities. Let us take the first instance of this in Mark, when in the synagogue he rid a man of an unclean spirit (1:26). About the same time, in Capernaum, they went to Simon's house, where his wife's mother lay "sick of a fever": "And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them" (Mark 1:31).

It is not difficult to imagine how the news of these two miracles would spread in the countryside and around the shores of the Lake. They would be sufficient in themselves to inspire the faith in his power that would simplify the treatment Jesus would exercise.

The faith that glows from an impressive personality may be likened to the touch of a warm, welcoming hand. We have to imagine the method employed by Jesus when he exorcised a tortured person of an evil spirit. With him it was not as it was with David when he played the harp for Saul. Jesus had no musical instrument, no wand, no philters or any of the paraphernalia of the sorcerer. Therefore, it is only his hands that we must consider in trying to determine what happened. Surely there were never hands like those of Jesus. Is it fair for us to imagine what laying on of hands meant to him?

It is unfortunate that, for an understanding of this, we have no information at all of the stature and presence of Jesus. We might infer that he was not deformed (despite the statement of Celsus); that he was not a weakling, nor dwarfish. No man could have endured the fatigue and agony of that week in Jerusalem unless he had unusual physical strength. We are not prone now to reject hastily the miracles of exorcising evil spirits and healing the sick. He must have had the hands that soothe; and, setting to work upon his patient with eyes gleaming with sympathy, a tender smile and a wooing voice, the operation could not fail to restore the ailing. He inspired faith, and faith as the handmaiden of health, serving the spirit, stirred the drowsing soul and gave hope to those he blessed.

CHAPTER IX

THE SECRET

Jesus was not a member of any of the exclusive groups that lived a life apart from the political and religious administrations of Judea. He was not a gnostic, for he taught the meek and humble, the very people who were not eligible for initiation. His mission was for one purpose only, and that was "to fulfil all justice." And his belief in it never wavered.

He could not have been a member of the Therapeutae, for this group settled near the Nile, and was not known to send out missioners to preach their doctrine. His mode of life differed from that of the Essenes, for from the time the mission began until the end of it, he was a simple individualist, and he observed no tenets of doctrine or behavior that likened him in any way to an isolated order of people who had withdrawn from the world. All the work of Jesus was done in the world. Indeed, the world was the territory of his mission.

He was not a primitive communist and did not advocate collective property for equal shares of products. Joseph Klausner, in *Jesus of Nazareth*, gives us an excellent report of these people, from the standpoint of a Jewish scholar. He tells us:

> . . . None was received into the community until he had undergone a year's probation, after which he was allowed to perform the lustrations.
>
> There followed two more years of probation, and only then was he received as a full member after taking a solemn oath to conceal nothing from his fellow Essenes, to reveal no secrets of the community to non-Essenes. . . .[1]

This is conclusive evidence that Jesus could not have been an Essene. Although both Klausner and other eminent Bible scholars state that Essenes were to be found in different parts of Palestine, some as far north as Syria, the central place of the community was on the western shores of the Dead Sea. If Jesus knew of them or had met their members, he did not mention it, nor did he at any time teach the Essene doctrines. He associated with no group of any of the ascetic orders. His disciples were working men, for the most part, and not one of the twelve is presented to us as a member of a communal group until after the death of Jesus; and in that case it was his brother James who lived, like a veritable Essene, the life of a monk and ascetic.

Jesus kept no secrets from the people who came to hear him, and although the draconic rigor of the observance of the precepts certainly does have a strong strain of asceticism in it, they were given freely to the poor and the sick, far removed from a monastic community.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 206.

In studying this period, I think we should realize that a spiritual revolution had been taking place for five hundred years before Jesus was born. There was a soul hunger that had not been appeased by the prophets of any of the old civilizations; even the solar monotheism of Ikhnaton had failed of its purpose. The spread of Hellenistic philosophies after Plato and Zeno should convince us that the educated people of distant lands were spiritually avid for a new gospel. This is an indication of the nature of the spiritual upheaval in regions from Athens to Babylon and from the Black Sea to the Nile. The world was weary of futile wars. All efforts to save civilization had then come to naught. The aim of Alexander to integrate the rival factions east and west fell short of success, probably because he died too early. He was followed a century and a half later by Pompey who laid Palestine under the aegis of Rome.

Small wonder then that groups of men whose souls were in revolt against the political systems should forsake the world and form into communities such as the Therapeutae and the Essenes. But we wonder how it was possible for Jesus in southern Galilee to come in contact with Greek-thinking Jews or members of the ascetic groups. There is no hint in the Gospels of his meeting with anyone who could have instructed him in the principles of Stoicism.

The Gospels present him as one who reasoned things out for himself. He was of no school of secular learning. All we know about his education is that he taught in the synagogues, and that those who heard him were amazed not only at his knowledge, but at the new interpretation he gave to Scripture. To me he appears as the loneliest man who ever went amongst crowds of people. Even his mother and his brethren showed no sympathy for his work.

He spoke in parables, although he knew that his hearers would not comprehend the meaning of them. It may very well be that some of the seeming contradictions in them may be attributed to ideas that crossed his mind, to which he gave voice as if he were speaking to himself. Why he should hide anything from the people is a problem which has perplexed the minds of many of the scholars. Perhaps the difficulties presented by the passages on the parables arise from what I have called the seed theory, which seems to have haunted his mind. It appears in seven of the parables, but in these there is no occult screen that hides a simple understanding of them by people who cultivated the fields. To him nature was a constant miracle, spring after spring, the dead coming to life and the tiniest seed piercing the crust of the soil and growing voluptuously into a large plant, giving food or flowers and perfume. He must have asked himself over and over again what the power was in that dried seed that gave life to it season after season.

In this we may find a reason for the contradictions in the parable stories. For in speaking his thoughts aloud on the mystery of germination, he would realize that, although there were tillers of the soil among the crowd, they had never given a thought to the mystery of growth.

The mind of Jesus was like a gushing spring, ever flowing through the seasons, and upon it there drifted leaves and twigs and other things washed from the sides where it flowed. The thirteenth chapter of Matthew is a revelation of his poetic fervor. The word pictures of the parables presented to the people were readily known to them all, but what they meant, they did not understand. They see the picture but not the reason why it is painted, and they hear words but not sense. When the disciples asked him why he spoke in parables, he replied as follows: "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand" (Matt. 13:13).

He might have been a student of Greek philosophy and have read Heraclitus who said: "Eyes and ears are bad witnesses to men if they have souls that understand not their language."[2]

It is in this chapter we find a sentence so extravagant that there has been no attempt to interpret it. Some have said that it defies analysis, and some of the modern gnostics (like Mead) who wrote two generations ago accepted it as a very ancient saying in the ritual of Greek gnostics; but to utter it was not in accord with their ritual, in keeping their most precious secrets for the initiated.

What could the secret be? What was hidden from man from the beginning of the world? Could it be a secret hidden from the senses? Surely not, for what was seen in nature was seen by Adam, Abraham, Jacob and Moses. Keeping to the text of the Scripture, we may decide that in general they could touch, taste, smell, and hear what Jesus did. Scientists of today have added no new principle concerned with the senses, which was overlooked by those who compiled the Pentateuch. Therefore, we must leave the field of the senses and turn to mind. Here we encounter the evolutionary problems that engage the attention of anthropologists and psychologists, and perhaps some of the latter are quite right when they suggest that man was not man until he discovered he had a mind.

But the secret had been hidden since the beginning of the world, and according to Genesis, man was the last of the creatures. If our interpretation of Genesis is right, he was not created, he was made and given shape as an adult. It is not surprising that these peculiar contradictions and lapses in our narrative concerning the evolution of man made thousands of intelligent working men, influenced by the theories of Darwin, reject in their entirety the stories in Scripture.

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[2] Quoted in J. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, London, A. & C. Black, 4th ed., 1930, p. 133.

However, there was no Darwin or any of his disciples when the Bible was compiled. Yet, it is pertinent to our brief analysis to show that the secret thought of by Jesus was present from the beginning and eluded the imagination of the patriarchs and the prophets, soothsayers and seers of all the people whose history was known, until the time when the mission of Jesus began. It was then a purely spiritual exercise of the mind that was needed to reveal the place where the secret was hidden and the reason why it had not been found before the proclamation of Jesus.

''Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice.'' This is the imperative of all categorical imperatives, and in it we discover that the secret is justice, to be found only in the kingdom of God, which is in man himself. Justice was from the beginning. It was and is the law inviolable in creation itself.

No matter in what school of thought we have been trained to our own thinking, whether in any of the many religious creeds, the philosophical systems, or any of the mystery cults, we cannot find one that can dispense with the principle of eternal justice inherent in all nature. I do not know an author, who has written instructive works upon these subjects, who has succeeded in breaking the link that binds justice to creation. The term has been so shamefully abused by politicians that its true meaning has been lost.

Justinian laid it down: ''He is just who gives to each what belongs to him.''

Origen says: ''All things were created by the word of God and by His wisdom, and were set in order by His justice.''

Clement of Alexandria, the master of Origen, held the same view, and centuries after them, Thomas Aquinas handed on the like thought. In *Disputed Questions* he said: ''Justice is a constant and perpetual will to yield to each one his right.''

Early Christian and medieval literature is rich in such interpretations of the term justice. Perhaps the most explicit statement of this matter was made by Richard Hooker, in *Ecclesiastical Polity*. He held the highest position in law, Master of the Temple. His pronouncement was:

> Human laws are measures in respect of men whose actions they must direct, howbeit such measures they are as have also their higher rules to be measured by, which rules are two—the law of God and the law of Nature; so that laws human must be made according to the general laws of Nature, and without contradiction to any positive law of Scripture, otherwise they are ill made.

Meister Eckhart, who was perhaps the greatest preacher of the Middle

Ages, says in one of his Sermons: "The just man is so earnest for justice that, if God Himself were not just, he would not care in the least for God."[3]

A Bible student, reflecting upon the long history of thought that the philosophers of the ages have devoted to this fundamental problem, might wonder why our eminent Bible scholars have had so little to say about it. I have looked in vain through volume after volume for a reference to it. Its neglect is one of the strangest in sacred literature. How can it be explained?

The statement is in flat contradiction to the parables he uttered before it. The meaning of them is to be kept hidden, but at the same time he is ready to reveal the secret that has been hidden since the beginning of the world. Would the passages be clearer if the narration of the parables ended with: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet" (13:35)? He has already told them about Isaiah, who spoke in parables, and we should keep the reference in mind when we come to the termination of the parables in verse 35.

The declaration of the secret is a totally different line of thought. There may be something missing here, for it comes suddenly and is an amazing announcement to be made to the meek and lowly. Why such a startling change of thought? To speak parables with a hidden meaning to those who could not understand, and then to begin the sentence with the emphatic "I will utter" is a complete reversal of idea. It seems to me there must have been an introduction to this stupendous announcement.

Moreover, the secret is not here revealed. Only the statement is made. Where, then, in the Gospels did he make plain to the crowds or his disciples what the secret was and how it should be discovered? There is an answer to this question which may seem to be far fetched; it is to be found in an earlier chapter of Matthew, at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. It was there told them, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice" (6:33). In Luke (but not in Matthew or Mark) we read that the kingdom of God is within each one of us. The passage is quite clear. Let us read it again:

> And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:
>
> Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:20-21).

It is no easy task that is set the student who would discover the great secret. The above quotation is an example of the difficulties encountered in the Synoptic Gospels of piecing together the spiritual philosophy of Jesus, as he expounded it. Some of it is found in Mark, and what is not found there may perhaps be in Matthew. His answer to the Pharisees, given in Luke chapter 17:21, is an example of the scattered parts of one complete Gospel, that of the good tidings. Klausner has some instructive pages upon this very problem. However, I should like to ask if it was really a Jewish idea that the kingdom would come "not with observation." This seems to preclude a messianic change of a political nature.

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[3] *Meister Eckhart*, by Raymond B. Blakney, New York, Harper, 1941, Sermon 18, p. 179.

It really means that in the kingdom of God there will be a reign of justice. For justice is God's law inherent in creation. Justice is the divine law of natural order. It is not man made. God has hidden it in creation itself, and Jesus divined that what was created was meant for the use of all men of all time. He realized that there was a fixed limit to man's powers. He could not produce a grain of sand, but from that which was created he had to draw his sustenance, and could not live or work without it. For years I was asked to define justice, and the best that I could do was: Justice is the law of Providence inherent in nature.

There can be only one interpretation of these parables about the seed. To my mind, he was describing the secret of eternal justice—that seed of justice which was firmly planted in things created for the use of men.

Of the evolutionary process Aristotle said: *Love does it.* For myself, I believe there must have been, from the beginning, a law of concord, which, as first things evolved and developed, would draw all together in harmony to use the basis of subsistence without stint. I venture to postulate that that law was eternal justice, the law of the Creator inherent in nature. It might indeed be called, in the Aristotelian sense, the law of Love bestowed by God on all His children.

The law of God's justice was there in creation itself—hidden—for men to discover. Like a seed planted in the darksome earth, germinating and developing until it bursts forth in the light to flourish in the sight of man, so the idea of the law of justice was planted in the soul of man for him to discover. But deprived of the light of his soul—the sun of his understanding—it lay neglected until Jesus learned the secret of all secrets and gave the "good tidings" to men.

It is impossible to think that this secret, hidden from men since the beginning of the world, was anything else but divine justice. For is it not conceded by the scholars of all persuasions that, as G. R. S. Mead says, the great principle of justice is one of the manifestations of deity?

The secret must have concerned something fundamental, something that was present in creation at the beginning, something that evolved. Sun, moon, stars, and the earth were all visible to every creature who could see. But this particular thing which had been kept secret, men had failed to see. The discovery of it he likens to a great treasure, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field" (Matt. 13:44), and that, when justice is come, the just shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43).

Jesus had discovered the essential difference between things created and things produced. The world about him and beyond was suffering from injustice. He must have known the whole story of the revolt against the authorities, for Nazareth lay within the zone of the campaigns of the Gaulonite. He also knew that the old Law of Moses had been broken and how, through the generations before him, the prophets had denounced the great iniquity which had reduced the people to poverty. He said: "For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and they lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matt. 23:4).

More thought should be given to the meaning of "The kingdom of God is within you," or, as some of the Bible scholars have it, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." The church, unfortunately, sticks obstinately to the idea that the kingdom is not here; there is nothing mundane about it.

Jesus taught of a kingdom that was to restore all things according to the Law. This means that the sense of eternal justice is implanted in the soul of man, and he must discover it for himself. But instead of searching within himself for the key that will liberate him from the grind of poverty, he has devoted himself wholly to the immediate problem of satisfying his material desires and needs. Hence, justice, the secret from the beginning of the world, lies dormant within him, like a seed that does not germinate. Only the practical mystics have realized that man must be nourished with the needs of the body if his spirit is to blossom forth. They have seen clearly that one is dependent on the other and that under a just system our material needs are few. Therefore, "Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

And finally he calls us: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

CHAPTER X

THE PRECEPTS

The precepts laid down by Jesus according to Matthew 5:39-47 are, in practice, so foreign to Church and State that worldly men have scoffed at them. When did either love their enemies? And as for turning the cheek for another blow—that is adding insult to insult, which no man of dignity would tolerate. It may be asked if there is any way to resist evil without resorting to it. To smite one who strikes you cannot be done without violence, and violence is evil. What, then, is the individual to do to put an end to it? This question has been answered over and over again, instances of which I have given above.

There has never been any efficacious law of the State that prohibited man or a group of men from isolating themselves within its confines and making a refuge wherein they could live at peace amongst themselves. Every monastic institution began in that way. But the practical man is not moved by this, because he thinks it would bring the affairs of the world to a standstill. His idea is that the State is necessary to keep order among the citizens. The old idea that the duty of the State was to protect property and the lives of its people fell to nothing long ago.

The further you remove yourself physically and spiritually from the regions where evil is practiced, the less chance you will have to encounter it. The monastic system, when the orders were at their most glorious, bears this out. The simpler life is, the freer the spirit. Jesus explained all this in no uncertain terms when he counseled "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

Probably the truth of the matter lies in our fear of change. The soul becomes so weary of contending with evil in vain that it loses all desire to struggle on against the travail of the world. As Hamlet says, it "makes us rather bear those ills we have than fly to others that we know not of" (Act III, sc. i).

It takes courage to renounce the world in these days. It is not so easy for us as it was for the people when the great monastic institutions were founded. Noble and vassal, peasant and serf were often gathered in a confraternity that knew no social difference of birth or estate.

It is sad to relate that, as these institutions grew in grandeur and in wealth, most of them suffered from the evils of luxury. Then a decline set in which some were unable to check. There were, however, a few in England and in European countries that withstood the temptations which came with luxury and ease, but the storm that swept Europe towards the middle of the fifteenth century brought ruin in its train and a bitter end to many of the orders. In the havoc of the dissolution of the monasteries much of what were monuments of the culture of those who withdrew from the world was wrecked. Those that were spared are today venerated examples of Christian art at its best.

What we owe to them who withdrew from the world all scholars agree is a debt that can never be repaid. It is hard to think of one thing in our culture and our art that has not enriched our lives, rejoiced our spirit. Music, painting, sculpture, stained glass, missals are only a few of the treasures these men bequeathed to us.

What, then, can be done to keep men secure in a life of peace? If such organizations as those I have dealt with failed to maintain the principles of their founders, what can be expected from any groups of men within or out of the world? Must we say the cloister was not enough, that the evils that they forsook crept into the sacred precincts, and turned their minds to craving for the baubles of the world?

Must we, therefore, decide that the precepts of Jesus are for the individual and that he alone must solve the problem of his own life? Israel proved it cannot be done by the tribe. Every expedient was tried in her history of two thousand years, and all failed. The civilizations of the Christian Era have reached their zenith and now are in swift decline. What is to be the system of the new era no one dares predict. Will the same old story of rise and fall be repeated? Who can say? Science is silent, and our philosophers preach from new texts. The church offers what consolation it can, and some of the sects have lost few of the devout. Nevertheless in many of the denominations the drift away to secular attractions is noticeable.

What is the purpose of human life? For the millions, is it to toil, grovel and sorrow and, for the few, to amass wealth and revel in luxury? These are questions thinking workingmen ask. Or is there some way of closing the gap that lies wide between rich and poor, some course that will turn men's minds to higher things? Surely the single watchwords of Jesus for a spiritual reformation are: Repent, Renounce, Redeem.

Are the precepts, as strict disciplines of conduct for mind and spirit, attainable in a world in which the worship of mammon is a necessity for survival? These stern commands were given to poor Jews who had been despoiled by the State and needed the necessaries of life. This should not be forgotten when we consider the strict severity of the precepts.

Some of the critics have pointed out that Jesus himself was guilty, several times, of infractions of the laws he laid down for others. Joseph Klausner and Friedlander mention some cases in which he infringed the very precepts he held sacred. Klausner, for instance, says that he hated the Pharisees. I fail to find any evidence of this, however. It is true he hated the sin, but not the sinner, which is a very different matter. But hatred of sin and sinner figures largely not only in the affairs of Israel, as set forth in the Old Testament, but strangely enough, it appears frequently in the Acts and the Epistles. Perhaps Yahweh was the bitterest hater portrayed by ancient history; and as for Paul, his denunciation of those he called his enemies is noted in verse after verse of his Letters.

Klausner and Friedlander feel, also, that Jesus infringed his own precepts when he judged, although he told the people, "Judge not that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). Again, I must confess I am unable to find an instance of this in Mark or Matthew. In criticizing the behavior of the Pharisees and others, he did not judge the *person* but *what he did*, and this was necessary as an explanation to his hearers as to what they should not do.

In speaking to people of simple minds, something more than advice is called for. They, like others, when they hear counsel such as Jesus gave to them, wonder why they should observe the rule. In nearly all cases, he presents the obverse as an instance of what not to do. This cannot be considered a violation of his precept, "Judge not that ye be not judged." Yet, who was so ready to judge others as the Pharisees themselves? There is good reason for the jibe so frequently used to describe the Pharisee: "I am holier than thou." Conscious humility is no virtue. St. Bernard makes that clear to us in his *Steps of Humility*.

What was there to judge in making a remark about a mannerism that could be seen by anybody with eyes? It was not a question of whether or not the Pharisees disfigured their faces or prayed in public (Matt. 6:16). There was nothing to decide. Klausner and Friedlander overlook the fact that Jesus did not at any time claim to be a paragon of virtue. He knew himself, and he had been tempted many times. When the rich young man called him "Good Master," Jesus replied, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God" (Mk. 10:18). He made no exception in this; he included himself.

The other criticisms of Jesus are in a similar vein, and need not be dealt with here. Nevertheless, it must be granted that no prophet of Israel before Jesus gave to men precepts of such sure ethical value as those contained in the Sermon on the Mount. If they are to be understood and appreciated, it must be kept in mind that they were addressed particularly to those referred to in the Beatitudes.

The philosophy of existence, as expressed by Jesus at that time, was new only in the definite way in which these counsels were crystallized. To concentrate the core of a philosophy in a comparatively few sentences was the work of a spiritual genius. For five hundred years before his birth, the known world from Athens to the Nile had been in intellectual revolt against the old political and social systems. A revolution of the spirit took place, and for the first time the fundamental of a new system was debated at the Piraeus, as we are told in Plato's *Republic*.

This marked a period when the question of the relationship between man and the State became the dominant problem of the philosophy of scholars. Here we should pause for a moment to examine those tenets, so that we may contrast their principles with the precepts and ethical counsel Jesus gave to the poor and lowly, the meek and humble.

When Socrates began the search for a thorough understanding of the term justice, he was taking up the problem where the Prophets of Israel had left off. Amos and Isaiah, Micah and Haggai were some of those who had done the spade work of disinterring the economic fundamental of Moses, as it is laid down in the command "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark." From the time of Saul until Rehoboam succeeded his father, the cry for justice went unheeded in Israel. It had lain for centuries under the debris of hopes unfulfilled. What I call the eleventh commandment—referring to the landmark—had been forgotten. Indeed, it lost its significance shortly after the twelve tribes were settled in their portions of the land in which they were to eat bread without scarceness.

It would be to our advantage to turn to *The Republic* and refresh our minds about the conclusions reached by Socrates after the earnest debate he had with his friends. In another place I have given a composite definition of justice, but here I should like to repeat the ideas which are closely akin to much we have found in the Sermon on the Mount:

> Justice is the institution of a natural order in which a man can produce his necessaries for himself, . . . not taking what is another's, not being deprived of what is his own, having what is his own, and belongs to him, interfering not with another, so that he may set in order his own inner life, and be his own master, his own law, and at peace with himself.

I am not familiar with any work that deals specifically with the problem of justice, as the term was conceived by Moses, the prophets, and Jesus. Perhaps the reason for the silence concerning it in books by Bible scholars is that there has been so much confusion as to what is meant by it. The term has been so abused under political systems that its original application has not been considered. Primarily it is economic, and from it a whole ethical system of the rights of the individual is in theory firmly established. It should be unnecessary to point out that it has no meaning other than the economic one, as it is used by its advocates in the Books of the Old Testament, and particularly by Jesus.

One reason for this term being ignored is that the Anglo-Saxon word "righteousness" in the King James version is substituted for justice. Consequently, quite another meaning is given to passages in which the word righteousness appears. The Douay version, which is a translation from the Vulgate of Jerome, uses the proper term "justice," and in only a few cases have I found the term righteousness used to portray such minor virtues as rightness, rectitude, and uprightness, which describe a person whose demeanor entitles him to be received in respectable society. Let us, then, use the term "justice" so that we may understand it as a fundamental concept of philosophic thought.

We might ask why the wisest of men in the heyday of Greece turned to consider the derivation, meaning and application of this all-important word. What was the state of daily affairs, under political rule, at the time Socrates debated the question with his friends? In art and philosophy Greece had reached a height never approached by any other people—from Pythagoras to Plato, Greek thought was given to the fundamentals of mind and soul—but all was not well with the political system; under Pericles the Welfare State made its first appearance.

In the *Nemesis of Nations*, Romaine Paterson deals with the conditions in Greece, and reveals the creeping paralysis of the decadence, slowly but surely undermining the stability of the State. Doles, bribes and other nefarious practices by the rulers were necessary to keep the people quiet. No wonder, then, that high and low, rich and poor were disturbed by the uncertainties of existence, and indulged in the hope of the coming of a new world. They realized, as Socrates points out, that the deluxe State was tired and showed unhealthy signs of breaking down. It was ameliorative care. Still, to many, things had a surface appearance that seemed to bode a period in which some of the old strength might be recuperated.

With Israel it was different. Her wise men had for many centuries denounced lawless rulers, the heavy burdens of taxation, and the tribute taken by invaders. They had long hoped for a new world governed by a messiah who would represent the ideals fostered by Amos and the (three?) Isaiahs, to mention only two of the prophets in whom there still burned the light that shone at Sinai. Centuries had passed in trial and tribulation without a gleam of hope of spiritual redemption. Judges and Josiah had labored in vain, and they saw Israel a prey of the powers of the Euphrates.

How strange that old Israel and a comparatively new Greece should fall into similar sicknesses, at different times. They imagined that a changed new world might supplant the past and give to men the power to rule themselves in mind and soul by forsaking mammon and living in peace.

In the early years of the third century B.C. a man from Cyprus went to Athens and founded a school of philosophy. His name was Zeno, and his followers became known as Stoics. We have only fragments of his sayings and writings, but what there are of them remain down to this day firmly implanted in the minds of the greatest scholars of this era.

Higher critics have pointed out the resemblance between the precepts of Jesus and the counsels of Zeno. One in particular is to fly from the evils of the State with its wars and heavy taxes; its patronage and privilege; its emoluments and greed; its hatreds and sedition. All of these grave defects may be found in the history of every State, and no doubt long before the time Zeno went to Athens, peoples east and west believed the old world was coming to an end, and looked for a new one.

Zeno was first associated with the Cynics, who were materialists, and afterwards formulated a philosophy of his own. One of the best short statements on the Stoic school will be found in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. It is written by Professor Robert Drew Hicks, formerly Fellow and Classical Tutor, Trinity College, Cambridge. One passage is as follows:

> . . . Zeno visited all the schools in turn, but seems to have attached himself definitely to the Cynics; as a Cynic he composed at least one of his more important works, "the much admired *Republic*," which we know to have been later on a stumbling-block to the school. In the Cynic school he found the practical spirit which he divined to be the great need of that stirring troublous age. For a while his motto must have been "back to Socrates," or at least "back to Antisthenes." The Stoics always counted themselves amongst the Socratic schools.[1]

The importance of this statement is found in the reliance that the Stoics placed upon Socrates. To them, as to him, man was a world unto himself. He was a complete entity, and as an individual he could order his life in harmony with the rest of his fellows. Indeed, the definition of justice given by Socrates is not very different from one that might have been written by Zeno in his work, *The Republic*.

In this, we must recognize the astounding shift of ideas from the State, on the one hand, regulating the life of men, to men minus the State, on the other hand, regulating their own lives. It was from one extreme to the other—from the State as the ruling power to anarchism. How very different were the thinkers of that age from those who made the State the bureaucratic monster condemned by Proudhon and Bakunin. Strange to say, the ideas of the Stoic school were accepted without demur by the educated classes of that time, and later by those in Rome. They were welcomed without fear, for the old systems had been well tried and failed, and presumably they thought that, at worst, the new might be better than the old.

However, there was much more to it than this, and one of Zeno's disciples, Cleanthes, gave to his world a conception of the Creator not unlike that given by Amos to the Jews. In a hymn of majestic beauty, Cleanthes declared:

> Most glorious of immortals, O Zeus of many names, almighty and everlasting, sovereign of nature, directing all in accordance with law, thee it is fitting that all mortals should address. Thee all this universe, as it rolls circling round the earth, obeys wheresoever thou dost guide, and gladly owns thy sway. Such a minister thou holdest in thy invinci-

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[1] 14th ed., XXI, 429.

> ble hands—the two-edged, fiery, everliving thunderbolt, under whose stroke all nature shudders. No work upon earth is wrought apart from thee, lord, nor through the divine ethereal sphere, nor upon the sea; save only whatsoever deeds wicked men do in their own foolishness. Nay, thou knowest how to make even the rough smooth, and to bring order out of disorder; and things not friendly are friendly in thy sight. For so hast thou fitted all things together, the good with the evil, that there might be one eternal law over all. . . . Deliver men from fell ignorance. Banish it, father, from their soul, and grant them to obtain wisdom, whereon relying thou rulest all things with justice.[2]

In place of Zeus, read "Creator" or "Jehovah," or as Jesus would say "Father." The description of the universal power may be attributed to all of these. Some of the critics who are students of Greek philosophy have pointed out resemblances in the beatitudes and precepts akin to the theories of the Stoics.

I have remarked in my essays that much of the work done by the scholars in tracing sources of what I call fundamental ideas is educative. But much of it overlooks the fact that in the earliest of histories we find peoples far apart in distance, with scarcely any means of communication, holding the same basic laws. That there should be no doubt of this may be easily demonstrated. One has only to read the titles on the spines of the more than forty volumes of Max Müller's works, called *The Sacred Books of the East*. In this collection it will be found that peoples living far apart in very early times were working upon the principles laid down by Jesus in the precepts given in the Sermon on the Mount.

It might be surprising to some of our students to learn that Buddhism was known to the Romans. A passage in a book that deserves to be better known confirms this idea. It is *The History of Magic* by Kurt Seligmann, published ten years ago by Pantheon Books (1948). It is an extraordinary volume and one the student of the Bible and the literature on Scriptures should not ignore. Here is a striking passage:

> Wisdom and philosophy traveled along strategic and commercial routes. Alexander's conquests had opened Asia to an astonished West. When finally Rome mastered the subtle art of governing, the intercourse of the nations reached its peak. Universal religious toleration was Rome's traditional policy. The doctrine of Buddha spread to the Mediterranean and exerted its influence. Buddhistic teaching had been sanctioned by treaties under the Seleucidan and Ptolemaic rulers. Buddhism revealed to the West that the acquisition of wealth was not necessarily a blessing, that salvation could also be gained in absolute chastity and poverty. The highest morality of the monks of India rested no longer in the strength to maintain oneself in the struggle for existence, but in the surrender of all strife and the renunciation of self.[3]

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 430.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 99.

The author covers a very wide field of religious practices, and sometimes takes us far away from any semblance of magic into fields of profound philosophic meditation. Perhaps the word "magic" in the title has deterred scholars who otherwise might have read it.

The study of the similarity of ideas in religions and philosophies of the long past is an engrossing one and well worth the time to be given to it. In the case of the landmark, for instance, what was good for the people at the time of Hammurabi, in this respect, was practiced in Egypt, and so it was in China earlier than Hammurabi. We not only read of it in Plato's *Laws*, but we have an instance of it in the last chapters of the *Iliad*. Why, then, should it be necessary to go to the trouble of finding sources for Stoic precepts in lands and people that did not know Zeno or Chrysippus? Hence, we must decide that whatever is in the philosophy of Jesus, as expressed in the Sermon on the Mount, is original, for no one would pretend that he had read *The Republic*, knew the Hymn of Cleanthes, or had even heard of a lecture that Chrysippus gave in Tarsus. Why so much stress has been given to the so-called parallelisms to be found in the precepts and the Stoic philosophy, I cannot understand. Who would question the source from which Ikhnaton culled his ideas for his new kingdom at El Amarna?

Perhaps one of the reasons why the scholars have found a similarity of ideas between Stoicism and the philosophy of Jesus is that it is hard to believe the son of a carpenter, born in a Galilean village, should burst upon a world in mental flux with such a stupendous conception of the kingdom of God on earth. This all-embracing philosophy as a way of life exceeds anything that was taught by the Stoics, for in it Jesus never lost sight of the physical fact that men must eat. "And all these things shall be added unto you" is said to the ailing and the hungry.

The kingdom of an all-bountiful Creator raises the material sense of fundamental economics to a divine altitude in the philosophy of Jesus. The earth is His footstool and is for the use of all.

CHAPTER XI

THE LORD'S PRAYER AND THE PARABLES

I know of no theologian who would give an interpretation of the Lord's Prayer that would have satisfied a Bible student of fifty years ago. Perhaps the difficulty that has confronted most of us lies in the thoughtless familiarity of repeating it over and over again since childhood. However, this ought not to have troubled the men who have given spiritual renderings to it, which take it out of its setting. It should be remembered that it was given to the meek and humble, with a precise meaning for the poor and needy.

Perhaps the word "heaven" has been another difficulty the theologians have found it hard to surmount. Taking it as a whole, literally, as we read it or recite it, there are two subjects that are not quite akin. The first one ends with the words "our daily bread"; the second begins with a plea for forgiveness for sins, and it goes on to petition for help to avoid temptation and evil. Let us take the word "heaven" and try to place it in the understanding. Where is it? The reply surely must be, "wherever God's justice reigns." It may be anywhere and come at any time, for the will of God is to be done on earth. Therefore, man himself is designated indirectly as the maker of his own heaven, one in which there will be no poor and needy. In Luke we read "The kingdom of God is within you," and this is accepted by many of the theologians as the place in which God's will shall be done. Here, then, must be the seat of justice, and where justice reigns heaven is.

In the early versions of the prayer perhaps the last line but one of the Sermon on the Mount was included. Yet, it fits perfectly where it is placed. Associate it with "Thy will be done on earth," and read it thus: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice." The rest of the sentence shows clearly that the heaven that Jesus had in mind should be enjoyed by the children of God, for the direction ends with the most glorious promise: "And all these things shall be added unto you." May we then determine that heaven is the soul of the just man, and that the secret from the beginning of the world, revealed by Jesus, was the first law of creation? The earth is the footstool of God and declares His bounty to all generations of men. Jesus was the inspired fundamental economist. He told his hearers that, under a just system, they should take no thought of what they should eat, drink nor wear, "for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (Matt. 6:32).

The Lord's Prayer has been repeated daily all over the Christian world since church services began. Moreover, it has been the bedside prayer of households generation after generation. The child is taught to say it at the age of four or five years. No matter how certain parts of the services have been changed, and collect after collect has been added, the Lord's Prayer remains without revision. There have been some attempts by theologians to explain it, to make its meaning clear to the devout, but I have never heard its two main petitions taken as texts for sermons at any service held in a church. Yet, it provides in both the aims of the mission of Jesus to fulfill all justice.

I realize the impediments in it that confront ministers of the Gospel, for when a war is being waged they have to consider the interests of the State. Their congregations at that time are in no mood to hearken to suggestions for a change of government or that enemies should be forgiven their trespasses. National interests run counter to the petitions of the prayer. Yet, at such times, the prayer is not omitted from the service, and as in days of peace, the habit of mumbling it is so ingrained that even the devout do not realize what the words really mean.

We may make an attempt to understand it by asking what was meant by "Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven." There can be no question that Jesus meant what he said. But what was his idea of the "kingdom of heaven"? For a clue to this we have to consider the purpose of his mission. It was to fulfill all justice. Are we wrong, then, in thinking that the kingdom of heaven is the realm of the just, and that the earth, as he knew it and as we know it, is the region of the unjust?

In support of this notion we find in Luke (but we know not how it was placed there) a saying which gives us the location of the kingdom: "The kingdom of God is within you." Hence, the kingdom can come to every man if he so desires to find it. It is in the individual soul, and the just man carries the kingdom within him. How else can the object of the mission be reached? Perhaps this may be considered extraneous reasoning by the practical worshipers within the church, who repeat the prayer at the services, although they are told explicitly to offer it up in secret.

Is there any other way the kingdom can come on earth? So far as I know, no one has attempted to say how it can be realized. A celestial home for souls was never preached by Jesus, and although he has been admired by many as the world's greatest idealist, he was, after all, a practical man of his time who never dreamed of such a world as this we live in. In this matter, it is sometimes overlooked that he spoke to the poor of southern Galilee. It is true we are told they came from many directions to hear him and brought their sick to be healed by him. But they were the poor, the downtrodden, and it was in their interest that he labored. He was one of them. We must never forget that. The people of the cities were elsewhere, but he did not exclude them; he did not count them out; his words were just as applicable to them as they were to the people who sat at his feet in that day.

Let us ponder the words that follow "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven": "Give us this day our daily bread." Does this mean that where heaven is, there is bread also? To the devout, who have not thought of what is implied by these words, the question may seem to give a mundane interpretation to a sacred thought, but what other meaning can be given to the words? The desire for bread that day must have been expressed by the multitude. Not only their appearance denoted hunger; the condition of their raiment showed the unmistakable signs of their abject poverty. Bread was wanted then. Jesus knew their needs and asked for relief that day. Although he had told them, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matt. 6:8), does this mean that repentance is necessary as a means of securing from the Father food for the body?

To what cause did Jesus attribute their sad plight? Surely it was injustice. They were the victims of economic spoliation. The sequence of the needs runs perhaps in this way: No bread, no man; no man, no soul; no soul, no kingdom.

We may now turn to the most difficult of all the passages for people of high civilization to accept. No matter how often they are repeated, no matter what the circumstances may be, the plea for forgiveness depends for an answer upon the will of the petitioner to forgive those who trespass against him.

Surely the Lord's prayer is not for the makers and supporters of the modern State. It is for the individual, for he as a civilian during a war may retire into his closet and forgive those that trespass against him. The more we try to reason out these precepts for the workaday world, the plainer it becomes that what may be simple for the individual to practice is impossible in any public gathering. Therefore, we may decide that the prayer was given by Jesus to those who were under no political or social obligation whatever to the government or to their neighbors.

Jesus states in another verse what is essential in this matter:

> For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:
>
> But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (6:14-15).

The logic of it is unshakable, and although the most dexterous theologians of the era have written treatises and delivered sermons upon methods of avoiding the issue, no one has dared to change a word or to give it another meaning.

There are so many passages in this chapter of Matthew, which are completely out of keeping with the daily practices and industrial activities of urban communities, that there should be no misunderstanding about the lot and character of the people to whom they were addressed. They were for poor Jews, not Christians. How is it possible to reconcile the passage in which it is stated whom man should serve:

> No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (6:24).

For those who remain in the world, the vast majority must serve the masters of mammon. It was so even in Galilee at the time of the Roman conquest. Notwithstanding the glowing accounts given in some parts of the work of Josephus, we learn from scholars who have investigated the matter that there were areas where serfs worked the land, and we may be sure that slaves did the heavy work for the army of Pompey.

From the earliest records of conquest, mammon—the god of ill-gotten gains—has been the one and only master of all involuntary service. Only some isolated peasant communities living within what Socrates called "the limit of necessity" escaped the ruthless sword of the conqueror. These people did not produce enough to store into barns and were not worth spoiling. Yet, in *The Sacred Books of the East* we find the piteous cries for protection against robber bands and, sometimes, invading armies who subjugate the peasants and make them slaves.

Mammon rules the world today. A man may be charitable and live in peace with his neighbors, but under the laws of the State he has to serve two masters. The unequal distribution of wealth is evidence sufficient for us to learn that injustice enriches the few and makes life hard for the many. What chance is there, then, of serving the master of Jesus? When the State can survive only by legalizing stealing, that is, taking the property of others, what chance is there for renouncing servitude to mammon?

There were no Pharisees, no Sadducees present to hear these precepts. The practical men of the cities remained aloof. If the report of the mission of Jesus reached the commercial marts, they perhaps would think it was nothing new for a prophet to harangue the crowds. They would remember the fate of many who chastised the Jews for their shortcomings and that some of them were stoned.

What the millions read and what they think no one can say. What they feel and what they do seem to have little relation to each other. Revivalists and evangelists come and go, and for a time they draw huge crowds to hear their sermons. But after the last hymn is sung and the devout separate and face again the tasks of making a living and rearing families, one is not surprised when their actions give one the impression that the weeks spent at the meetings have not brought about much change. The fact is we have to live in our world, and though there may be periods when we try to forget it, the necessities of the day force us back to the grindstone.

Hence, the Sermon on the Mount and the precepts it contains as a way of life are not for us. They were for the poor, those who had suffered from injustice, whose meager needs had little or no chance of exceeding the "limit of necessity." They were people of the soil and, at best, peasant proprietors probably cultivating an acre or two. Many, perhaps, had been serfs. If we keep in mind their condition, it will be easier for us to understand the concluding verses in this chapter. The land they cultivated gave them the principal necessaries, for the soil was fertile, and natural fruits were in abundance. The land grew famous wheat. Indeed, if we count out the luxuries of the rich man (such as game birds and fish and hot-house fruits), they had as good a board as he, if tax and tribute permitted them to enjoy it.

Moreover, the climate was such that the simplest clothes were all that were needed, and we are told that the hillsides of southern Galilee provided pasture for the flocks. When we keep these economic factors in mind, we shall understand that Jesus was not jeering at their condition when he said:

> Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment (Matt. 6:25)?

He pointed out that the birds of the air were cared for. "Your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they" (6:26)? Then he reminded them that God clothed the lilies of the field: "Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith" (6:30)?

> . . . Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.
> But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice; and all these things shall be added unto you (6:32-33).

It should be possible now for us to see clearly the whole structure of the philosophy, which in every respect is a manual of a way of life. The precepts and the counsels are linked together logically, and what is most remarkable, the prayer he gave to them—"Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"—is united with the command, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice; and all these things shall be added unto you."

He knew that they had forgotten the Law. He also knew that the promise had not been fulfilled. Therefore, he rebuked them: "O ye of little faith." So it was before him with the people who were to live in a land and eat bread without scarceness. And so it has been with all the generations of men down to this day. Our faith has been misplaced. We have forgotten the bounty of the Creator and have neglected the command to make a heaven on earth.

Most of the parables of Jesus bear the hallmarks of the intimate knowledge of a peasant poet. They are evidence of the economic conditions under which the family lived. No doubt they existed within the "limit of necessity." Frugality was perforce the practice of the household, and in respect to Jesus, we may say, the simpler the life, the clearer the thought. His work as a carpenter, even from the time he was an apprentice to his father, was one that called for exactitude in performance. The measure, the plane, the chisel and the mallet were tools to be used with precision. What the hand does with skill comes from a mind sure of its object.

Can we imagine the questions and problems that were discussed by father and son during working hours? We may surmise there would be history enough for Joseph to relate. For in all likelihood his grandfather was living when the legions of Rome entered Palestine. Perhaps the chief subject would be the uprising of Judas the Gaulonite and the attack on Sepphoris, for that happened when Jesus was about four years old.

Many of the parables, allegories and metaphors are word pictures drawn to illustrate the subtleties of profound speech. Jesus presents pictures of scenes and incidents familiar to villagers who delve and spin. The seed theme, as it may be called, Jesus returns to as if it were dominant in his thought. The passage in Matthew reads:

> . . . The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:
>
> Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree . . . (13:31-32).

This statement came from him soon after the disciples asked him why he spoke to the people in parables. Three or four times that day he put before them different examples of the use of the seed and its spiritual meaning.

The inner meaning of the seed *motif* is clear to me. The parables on it are not as cryptic as some of the scholars make out. Jesus is directing the minds of his hearers to the purpose of the parable, which is clearly stated in Luke (8:11): "The seed is the word of God." In the original Aramaic, "spirit" may have been the term used instead of "*word*."

The mystery in the seed—the grain that has to be planted—is never revealed. That this is so, according to the mind of Jesus, is clear from his words:

> . . . So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed in the ground:
>
> And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how (Mark 4:26-27).

No matter what the growth displays, as stem, branches, leaves, flowers and then seed again when autumn comes, the visible characteristics of development give no indication of what the power was that brought it to fruition.

> For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear (Mark 4:28).

There would be few who heard this who would fail to grasp its truth. It was such simple similes, colored by his knowledge of country toil, that forged the link which bound the simple people to him.

In the parable about the seed I find something akin to a mystical idea concerning that which is hidden. In the Pentateuch we were warned:

> The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law (Deut. 29:29).

When we examine the seed, lying in the palm of the hand, it resembles a shell that has a kernel. Perhaps it is a dry morsel that can be easily crushed in the fingers. The powder we examine is mere dust, and if we would keep it, put it in a box or on a shelf, preserve it in its present state, it will not alter its shape for centuries. Grains have been found in tombs that were made thousands of years ago. But if we take it to the garden and scratch a small furrow, place it there, and cover it lightly with the soil, in some weeks we shall see a tiny sprout breaking through the soil. This is the first signal of the secret that eludes us, working under the conditions it needs. We need not go further with the development of what we call this plant. The descriptions given by Jesus are quite sufficient for our knowledge.

Let us now turn to man. The body is a shell, which Novalis called the temple of the soul. Is it stretching the imagination too far to use the process of reasoning that we did in regard to the seed, by comparing one with the other? May we say that it is the condition of man that determines whether or not the vital spark in every seed begins to germinate in him? Does there lie hidden in him the force-potential which we admit was in the dry seed? Let those who wish, scoff as they may, but even they realize at times that somehow a man differs from his fellows in thought, in conduct and desire. One will prefer to care for the shell; the other will choose the things of the spirit.

Nature herself demonstrates, season after season, a faith in the growth and development of the seed, which remains unassailable, after tens of thousands of millennia. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (Matt. 6:32). This pronouncement was the first message that linked man, as a producer of his needs, with the Creator who provided the source of his sustenance.

Many quotations might be culled from the philosophers and poets, which indicate a desire to understand in the seed that which defies analysis. The producer has the faith in it to know that it will respond to his treatment. In the following verses we are made to realize the potency of faith in seed:

There is no unbelief;
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod
And waits to see it push away the clod,
He trusts in God.[1]

The will is free:
Strong is the Soul, and wise, and beautiful:
The seeds of god-like power are in us still. . . .[2]

We know more now about the thought of the philosophers and poets on this subject than was known to those who lived before the birth of Jesus. And, yet, it is strange that we find so little in the work of modern theologians that helps us to penetrate to the core of this mystery. Scientists in general are divided sharply about the worth of opinions upon the secret. Hans Driesch, Henri Bergson and several others who are called vitalists, or supporters of the idea of creative evolution, have made no progress in fields of hard and fast scientific investigation. Yet, no one seems to realize, even after much study of the works of the different schools, that the secret of the seed defies not only the thought of the scientist but the utility of instruments, such as the microscope. For this process cannot be submitted to experimental tests.

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[1] "Unbelief" by Lizzie York Case.

[2] "Written in Emerson's Essays," Sonnet 4, by Matthew Arnold.

CHAPTER XII

THE PLOT TO DESTROY HIM

The irregularities of sequence in recording events and occurrences of sayings, noted in Mark and Matthew, have been pointed out by some of the critics. Take, for example, the story of the disciples plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath and the remonstrance of the Pharisees. Mark deals with it in the second chapter; Matthew, in the twelfth. Also, much appears in the intervening chapters of Matthew that is not in Mark.

Can it be that the writers of the first two Gospels were working from two different Greek versions of the original Aramaic text? It does not seem likely, for there is so much in both Gospels that has an evangelical tone. A change of opinion (with a desire to give a Christian interpretation to these two Gospels) took place between the time of the crucifixion and the time when they were written. For instance, there was the renunciation of the old desire for a political messiah and the acceptance of a spiritual one. Long before the appearance of the Gospel of Mark (A.D. 65), the epistles accredited to Paul might have been written, and the conversion of the disciples to his doctrine took place in his lifetime, as is shown in Acts.

The importance of the story about plucking ears of corn is not in the act of its taking place on the Sabbath, but in what follows, according to Mark. In the next chapter, after the miracle of restoring the withered hand, we read: "And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him" (Mark 3:6).

The beginning of this plot has received scant notice from some of the Bible scholars. Perhaps that is the reason why there has been so much confusion in their dealing with the problems concerning the length of the mission, before the intervention of his enemies. We may take it that the statement in Mark refers to the early period, perhaps a year or more before the last visit to Jerusalem. In his long dissertation upon this matter, Klausner devotes much argument to the offense against the Pharisees and rabbis by the acts of Jesus performed on the Sabbath. But the matter does not rest entirely in that quarter, and the breaking of the sabbatical laws was scarcely a reason why the Pharisees should connive with the Herodians to destroy him.

It may be that the purists for ceremonial were powerless to act, for, as Jesus pointed out, there were exceptions to the rule, but they were not to the liking of those who considered the letter of the Law of more importance than the spirit of it. It is the plot with the Herodians which is of significance in this drama. What did they care about the disciples plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath?

Placing it entirely upon religious grounds, as Klausner does, makes it impossible to solve the problem that arises out of this affair. However, Charles Guignebert, who represents an entirely different school of thought, covers much of the historical ground of the observance of the Sabbath laws. He comes to the crucial point by saying:

> . . . It does not seem that the attitude to the Sabbath adopted by Jesus is particularly revolutionary. The Nazarene never spoke of doing away with it, nor did he disparage it. . . . In his eyes the spirit of the Law overshadowed everything, and was all contained in the Great Commandment of the love of God.[1]

Guignebert does not give one the impression that he thought the animus of the Pharisees was sufficient reason for plotting with the Herodians to destroy him. But he does make a special emphasis in declaring:

> . . . The most elementary reasoning would arouse the suspicions of the School, the Temple, and the Government . . . against the activities of a man who claimed to be answerable only to the Spirit. . . . What seems definitely artificial in the gospel statement is the idea that all these people united from the very beginning to get rid of the intruder (Mark 3:6), and that they laid traps for him. But that they did actually regard him as an annoyance, and exhibit a "class" hostility towards him from the moment they encountered him, is hardly to be doubted. . . .[2]

We assume that these events took place in Galilee. There is nothing that would lead us to imagine that they happened in Judea. From what we have learned about those within the "circle of the Gentiles," we gathered that they were not strict conformists and did not observe every detail of the ritual and its ceremonies. Therefore, it is somewhat surprising to find that the Pharisees in Galilee were formalists through and through, and intolerant of any infraction of the sabbatical laws. This is not sufficient. There is something missing here, for the collusion of Pharisee and Herodian suggests a reason on the part of the latter for being a party to the plot to destroy him.

There is only one instance recorded in the Gospels that might be a clue to the readiness of the Herodians to take action against him. This episode is told in Matthew. It is difficult to fix a time for it, but the arrangement of the chapters clearly shows that it took place before he left Galilee. It is told after the story of the transfiguration and is as follows:

> And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?
>
> He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

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[1] *Jesus*, p. 301.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

> Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free (Matt. 17:24-26).

A search through many of the works by experts yields little about this incident that would make us think it had been reported to the Herodians. It is not mentioned in Mark and Luke. Peter was present with Jesus on this occasion, and we might wonder why he did not tell the story to Mark if he dictated his reminiscences to him in Rome. There is another hard puzzle to solve in the way the story is set forth. The reader gets the impression that Jesus was alone with Peter, for there is no mention of the other eleven.

Perhaps we may throw some light upon it by quoting a few scholars of different schools of thought. Klausner deals with the question of tribute, and states:

> Jesus does not consider that he and his followers are bound to pay the half-shekel: the Messiah and his disciples are the sons of God and therefore need pay no taxes; but he does not wish, in his present plight, to arouse opposition ("to be a stumbling-block unto them"), and so, "for the sake of peace," he bids his disciples pay the tax.[3]

I read this as a general statement concerning the payment of tribute, but it does not help us to understand the reasons for the Galilean's antipathy to the payment of taxes. In reading Klausner on this episode, the student will find that the renowned Jewish scholar, in some peculiar way, has succeeded in confusing the issue. He seems to be disinclined to face the problem of the payment of tribute. Indeed, he goes so far as to say the Son of God and the "sons of God" are free from paying tax. But this is an expression that is not found in either Mark or Matthew. In both Gospels the reference to Jesus in this instance is the "Son of man," and Klausner himself has told us that to the Jews it meant only *man*.

Klausner deals with the payment of a half-shekel to the synagogue as an annual contribution. But that has nothing whatever to do with the payment of toll upon entering a city. The latter was surrendered to the municipal authority—the toll collector, such as Matthew was. This confusion is inexcusable, and the quotations from the Mishna are beside the point.

It is hard to follow Klausner's sketchy account of the itinerary in Galilee and neighborhood, before Jesus and the disciples leave for Jerusalem. He has certainly not relied upon Gospel sources for statements of their movements, which means that, in all probability, he is setting the time of the Capernaum episode about paying tax near the end of the mission in Galilee. However, the impression taken from Matthew is that it was early, and comes just after the transfiguration.

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[3] *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 304.

I thought Guignebert might give us some information about this incident, but the pages that cover this part of the mission yield nothing of value to our search for a clue. When we turn to Loisy in *The Origins of the New Testament*, we find that he deals with an important point in this matter. He says:

> . . . Peculiar to Matthew is the anecdote of the money and the fish (xvii, 24-27) in which an old story is utilized; it answers a question of moment to the Jewish-Christian Churches, even after the destruction of the temple, which question Jesus was supposed to have solved. Contrary to what he is made to say later about tribute to Caesar (xxii, 15-22), he here seems to deny obligation to pay.[4]

This statement is relevant and enlightening.

I do not remember that the Bible student of the time of the Brotherhood Movement had any difficulty in understanding the incident concerning the payment of "tribute," as it is described in Matthew 17:24-27. Hence, it is surprising to find that some of the eminent Gospel scholars are still confused about this matter of the payment of tribute. It might be well to look a little more deeply into this problem and point the distinction between tribute, toll, and tax.

Peter was a resident of Capernaum, and he was accompanied by Jesus, who was a stranger. When Matthew (whose Jewish name was Levi) asked Peter if Jesus paid tribute, Peter said, "Yes." But when Jesus asked Peter if the toll were paid by the children of the place or by strangers, Peter replied, "Of strangers." It is a complicated story, and the version we are quoting from in Matthew is now the cause of much confusion of mind among the Gospel scholars. In Mark we infer, and justly, I think, that this inquiry was made by the one who received customs (Mark 2:14).

Now those who collect "taxes" do not sit in the toll booth at the city gate to transact their business. The fiscal impositions that are levied fall upon the residents, and the office staff in the case of a town like Capernaum would perhaps call for three or four clerks, one to issue the demands for taxes; one or two others to enter the receipts in a book. However, the case of the incident described in Matthew is quite different, for in this instance Peter was not called upon to pay a toll, for he was a child of the town, and this toll fell only upon strangers who entered. This should be clear enough from the interchange that took place between Jesus and Peter after the toll collector inquired about the payment of the fee for entering the town.

The use of the fiscal terms is confusing, and perhaps it would be better if we put them in their proper order: tribute to Caesar, tax to the tetrarch, and toll to the town. There were, besides, the tithes and super-tithes to the Levites. The fact that Peter was not directly called upon to pay toll should be sufficient to clear the confusion by calling the fee that was exacted from a stranger entering the town a toll.

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[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 133.

A proper understanding of the problem of taxation, particularly in Galilee, will be necessary later, when we shall have to consider the most critical moments in the life of Jesus before he is brought before Pilate. Here, then, in this case of paying tribute, we may find a clue to the reason why the Herodians joined with the Pharisees to catch him in his words and make an end of him.

It is true that Judas and the Zealots drew no line of distinction between tribute and tax, for both were enforced by the emissaries of Caesar and were anathema to him and his supporters. The climax of Jesus' tragedy was reached during his last week in Jerusalem, when he was asked: "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not" (Matt. 22:17)?

It is in Guignebert's work that emphasis is laid upon the causes behind the movements of Jesus and the disciples from place to place, covering quite long distances for men who could not afford to ride. He says:

> . . . It seems as if the little band were trying, by moving quickly from place to place, to baffle an alarming pursuit. . . . The feeling of hostility towards Jesus which it [the Marcan narrative] attributes to the Herodians, along with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and Jesus' sudden and frequent changes of place are too logically convincing not to be true.[5]

The more one thinks of these movements referred to by Guignebert and the frequent changes from place to place, the stronger grows the idea that Jesus and the disciples knew that they were being watched by agents of the authorities. Thus, the notion of an educated Herodian spy looms large. Perhaps in this notion we get a little nearer to the authorship of the original Aramaic version of the mission.

It is quite difficult enough for the student to make an earnest attempt to reconcile the conflicting passages in the first two Gospels and resolve the contradictions and omissions found in them. However, when he turns to the works of the scholar-experts and looks for interpretations that will help him to find a direct story of what took place, he will be amazed at the different views expressed. And how often he will search in vain for enlightenment upon such subjects as the payment of toll on entering a city, and that other highly controversial matter of Jesus' renunciation of all claim to messiahship with which Peter credited him at Caesarea Philippi.

There is one conclusion it is possible to reach in this matter, and that is that Jesus and his followers knew they were being tracked and would some day—perhaps soon—be brought before the authorities and condemned. Thus, we cannot come to any other conclusion but that their work was doomed to failure.

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[5] *Jesus*, pp. 224-5.

CHAPTER XIII

WHO REPORTED THESE SAYINGS?

The Sermon on the Mount is a spiritual and ethical manual for the conduct of the poor. It is in three closely related parts: first, the beatitudes hold out a promise for those who have suffered from injustice:

> Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. . . .
> Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God (Matt. 5:5, 9).

Second, the precepts follow, and, with each one, the impositions for the neglect of practicing them are given. The third part concerns the physical needs of the despoiled: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (Matt. 6:32). As a sermon on one subject and its ramifications, it is perfect. There is nothing to be added, nothing to be omitted. Although it has been neglected as a whole, it still stands as the most concise specimen of eloquent counsel in ancient or modern literature.

In the beatitudes Jesus expressed the longings of the downtrodden, who, generation after generation, had suffered from injustice. Hopes of political reform had been dashed many times. They had reached a spiritual crisis for which only the reign of God on earth could promise relief from the ills of body and soul. The glad tidings of a heaven on earth enabled them to envision a reign of justice. The salt of the earth were to inherit the kingdom.

It is hard for us to understand how these consolations would affect such a crowd as came to hear them, for we have no record since that day of such a group gathered to hear a new gospel. He called them the salt of the earth, for was he not one of them, and did he not know that they were the downtrodden, the producers of wealth: of food, fuel, clothing and shelter, the necessaries of existence? And did he not know that the burdens of tribute and tax, of serfdom, were responsible for their plight, and that their poor souls had been worn by the anguish of poverty? Who would know better than he, living among them, being one of them, how desperate were their trials and tribulations after the wars that had ravaged Galilee since the descent of the Macedonian hosts? The memory of what happened two and a half centuries before would be kept alive generation after generation.

Salt of the earth! This title for the tillers of the soil and the kindred industries is not misplaced. Had not the prophets for hundreds of years voiced the claims of the exploited people of the countryside? Jesus might have remembered the promise of the New Jerusalem: "Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord. . .'' (Isa. 65:22-23).

This idea of economic justice can be traced all the way back to the promise of Moses: ''A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it'' (Deut. 8:9).

His love of the wretched and sympathy for their plight inspired him to state the beatitudes in words that survived the tumults of what are called the Dark Ages. They gave to the master abbots of medieval days texts not only for their finest orations but themes of beauty to the cathedral builders and the greatest painters and sculptors.

The precepts are knit together so closely that some of the critics have thought they could not have been spoken in one sermon. It has seemed to me that each one was brought forth for a different occasion, when Jesus found it necessary to utter an admonition or a reminder of the command. If they were delivered in the Sermon on the Mount, it was a feat of reporting to record them with such precision. Indeed, this might be said of many of the sayings, which read as if they were taken verbatim. Those who have suggested that the source of Mark was a collection of diffuse oral sayings have not considered how it was possible for anyone to remember them with the accuracy of a mechanical recorder.

It is worth while giving some time to a consideration of the problems that have arisen from the diverse opinions of the scholars about their origin. The crowd that gathered had not come to hear a speech. Mark says very little about sayings that would draw the people. Therefore, the assemblage is explained by the fact that they came because of his reputation as a healer and an exorcist. There is not a hint given to us about preparation for the meeting, and we may take it that the sermon was an impromptu oration. It was not read; it was spoken. However, it bears all the traces of long periods of deep meditation—thought that can only be formed into logical ideas in solitude.

We may be forgiven for asking: who was the disciple who thought that the words Jesus spoke would have to be kept in memory for some thirty or forty years after his death? Mark was not present, and Matthew is the only disciple whom the evangelists credited with a smattering of Greek. It is doubtful whether he could write it. Certainly his life as a toll collector gave him little or no chance to do more with that language than was necessary in collecting tolls from those who could not speak Aramaic, his native tongue.

There seems to have been no reason why the sentences should have been remembered by the crowd. For a moment let us reflect upon our own experiences in this respect. Some of us go to a church to hear a sermon given by a popular preacher. We are prepared in such a case to follow his address closely. For the time being, we have no other thought in mind. We are ready to be impressed. Whether or not we have benefited from the sermon, agreed with the line taken by the preacher, or found it wanting in appeal, we would be hard pressed on Monday morning to repeat in the precise words used by the preacher some of the sentences heard. In all probability, the best we could possibly do when asked about the sermon would be to give a general account of what was said. There might be one or two startling phrases that would stick in the mind. As for quoting sentence after sentence in the way in which they were delivered, that would be an utterly impossible task to perform. This has been tested over and over again by reporters themselves.

The Sermon on the Mount taken as a whole from the beginning of the beatitudes to the last words: "All these things shall be added unto you" (6:33) bears all the marks of a skillful reportorial performance. An editor ten or fifteen years afterwards could not possibly have collected from diverse persons oral sayings and put them together in the perfect order in which we read them today.

What, then, was the origin of an Aramaic version (as it was long held by the scholars)? For it was fairly well agreed that that was the source of Mark. Peter could not possibly have remembered the sayings as they are now read. The last week in Jerusalem was such a daily ordeal for him, and its events were so sensational, that every notion of the early months of the mission of Jesus would be obliterated. We might concede in the case of Peter and the other disciples that long after the death of Jesus he and they might remember the journeyings from place to place, the villages, and the miracles that were performed. All that might be possible. But to accept the idea that these men could remember the sentences of the Sermon on the Mount is asking far too much of any memory.

It should not be forgotten that the disciples were not looking for a Christian messiah. Like their fellows elsewhere in Palestine, they were hoping for a political messiah. This is the reason why they were rebuked by Jesus for their lack of understanding. The kingdom of God was not the throne of David. Justice they were interested in and had good reason to be; but whether they knew what Jesus meant by it is quite another matter. In all probability justice to them meant less tax and less tribute.

Who, then, was interested in the sayings of Jesus? Not all of them recorded in Mark and Matthew should be attributed to him. Many have been inserted by the evangelists to build up the Pauline doctrine. It is admitted by many scholars that some of them were called for in the controversies of the time to make a case for the Christian Church or, let us say, the groups that made up the Church after troublous years. In delving more deeply into the mystery of who put together the first Aramaic version, I sincerely believe a solution of the problem might be reached if we went to work as historians and not as defenders of one or the other of the many faiths.

It is amazing to think of what has been discovered in the way of early texts during the past two generations. In a criticism of the *New Testament in Greek*, just published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Reverend G. D. Kilpatrick, Dean Ireland's Professor of Exegesis of Holy Scripture in the University of Oxford, informs us:

> We know that other early texts are to be published, which may throw light on the history of the New Testament text in its first century and a half, a period of which we have hitherto known little.[1]

Barely twelve years are gone since the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered (1947). In one of the most recent books published on *The Scrolls and the New Testament*,[2] a symposium of fourteen papers by distinguished international scholars and theologians, the editor states: "Hardly anything of the magnificent discovery of a Gnostic library in Egypt in 1945, which will have considerable bearing on the origin of Christian doctrines, is yet available." And so it goes. We know not what is in store for Bible scholars in the way of hidden documents.

Still, I doubt the existence of Proto-Mark in the original Aramaic. Many have considered that it was lost after the Gospel of Matthew was compiled, a generation after the death of Jesus. Other scholars believe it was destroyed, and I agree with them, for it would have been of little use to Paul. He went to the cities, Jesus to the wayside. Damascus, Antioch, Athens, and Rome were not places for the Gospel preached by Jesus, and I shall try to show, when I deal with the last week, that his enemies—Pharisees and Herodians—realized to the full that he was no friend of the State.

There might have been a Greek text made directly from the Aramaic that was used by Mark and Matthew, and which probably existed when Luke wrote. If this were so, it would make the matter of the early Greek texts of the first two Gospels easier to understand, and why there are such strange gaps in Mark's account. Sometimes the brevity of a description in Mark makes the reader feel that something has been excised. Mark gives no genealogy, nor does he refer to the Virgin birth. Much that is in Matthew is missing in Mark. Was the Gospel attributed to him cut up to make Matthew? Mark was not a disciple; Matthew was. Let me put forward a suggestion I have had in mind for many years, one that I have offered to Bible scholars, Jewish and Christian, without gaining from them any notion that it was worth considering.

It is this: in the Gospel taught by Jesus there seems to be a thread of the doctrine of Stoicism running throughout. Indeed, some of the passages might have been spoken in Athens, and the Hymn of Cleanthes[3] is a paean to the purpose Jesus had in mind. It really does not matter whether we accept or reject this suggestion, for I know no scholar who is prepared to give it serious consideration.

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[1] *The Times* (London), May 7, 1958.

[2] Edited by Krister Stendahl, London, SCM Press, 1958.

[3] *Cit. supra.*, pp. 312-3.

But how could Jesus learn anything about Zeno? He was of peasant extraction, and no one has ever imagined that he went to a higher school or to a university other than the village synagogue. Such a question would overlook the fact that we are dealing with one of the world's greatest geniuses; the most highly God-endowed one that ever existed. Great thoughts have come from minds of lowly men, but when their words have become famous we sometimes forget the cottage in which the speaker was born and how he was bred. Fame cuts in two ways, and repute is very often a one-sided affair. For the wise father, who was perhaps the one who inspired the child, is merely mentioned as a parent.

In the case of Jesus it was not necessary for him to be in touch with an educated Greek to learn of the doctrines of the Stoa. In the wake of Alexander's armies, we may easily imagine young scholars from Athens and neighboring cities migrating to places that had been conquered by the Greeks. The opportunities were there that perhaps they desired; and, as commerce and art had, for some centuries before, permeated the thought of educated people in Tyre and Sidon, Antioch, Damascus, and other cities of northern Palestine, they would find those who spoke their tongue and whose fathers had hailed from the countries of the Black Sea and the Aegean. Such people might find employment in the offices of administrations left behind by Alexander to restore peaceful conditions and resume commercial relations with the traders of the Mediterranean and the East. But it is most unlikely that such men would gravitate to the villages of southern Galilee. Indeed, at Nazareth there would be practically nothing to administer.

Still, certain of the doctrines of Zeno are remarkably similar to those of Jesus. They may be phrased in a different way, but the sense conveyed by them is unmistakable. My purpose for this excursion into a very complicated matter is to find the reporter who followed Jesus and took notice of his sayings each day. I have already suggested that the Herodians and the Pharisees set a spy upon his track and that Jesus was conscious that his mission was suspected. If that had been done, the duty of the spy would have been limited to reporting seditious statements, such as nonpayment of tax and tribute. It would not have been necessary for such a man to report to the authorities the Sermon on the Mount. Yet, though it may be going far afield for a reason, the probability of two reporters following with the crowds is remote indeed. If we can accept the notion of one, then we might consider reasons why he took down the Sermon on the Mount, which contained no unlawful advice or command.

Having ventured thus far, the reader might ask what prompted the spy to go to the trouble of reporting statements that would be of no use to the authorities. This is just where the idea of Stoicism comes in. If the person set on the track of Jesus spoke Aramaic and Greek fluently, he might have been trained in a government office to administer those affairs that called for a thorough understanding of the language of the people. He might have been of Greek descent.

Is this notion too extravagant for serious consideration? It might seem so to a scholar who pursues the hard and fast rules of what is called factual evidence. Yet, it is not unusual for them to invent romantic suggestions with regard to doctrine. Therefore, I have followed the same method in this case.

For over fifty years I have studied the Sermon on the Mount, and the more thought I have given to it, the stronger becomes the notion that the Sermon was taken down in Aramaic, and that the same reporter translated it into Greek, the tongue of his people. If this be an acceptable line of reasoning, may we not then carry it a step further and decide that Mark's version, as it appears in the New Testament, was made from the translation? Since I know neither Aramaic nor Greek, I offer the notion to those who are highly qualified to consider it.

This idea is plausible. For Dr. Cheyne, in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, says: "The Epistle of James, even if, with Spitta, we should class it with the Jewish writings, must have had for its author a man with a Greek education. It was a born Greek that wrote Acts."[4]

It has always seemed to me that the source of the Synoptic Gospels, as it is debated by the higher critics, presents a difficulty that has not been satisfactorily investigated; and it is concerned with the Greek text from which the King James version was compiled. Again, the language question presents itself in a rather bewildering way. Could either Mark or Matthew read Greek or write it, with the competence of a disciple of Zeno? Another matter to be considered in connection with this is concerned with the needs of the Pauline Church. Many of the eminent scholars point out the passages in the first two Gospels that relate to doctrinal needs of the evangelists long after Jesus died. To me they stand out so plainly that I cannot understand how some of our mentors in this study can treat them so lightly. Many put forward ideas that are diametrically opposed to those of Jesus.

Hence, my purpose in raising this problem of language here is to discover, if it be possible, what really was proto-Mark—a Greek translation of Aramaic, or the original first-hand Aramaic report? Perhaps the matter will never be decided on the material that has so far come to light.

The spy set on the track of Jesus might very well have been of a highly educated Greek family versed in the Stoic philosophy. As to his knowledge of Aramaic, it is no stretch of the imagination to place him in the administration of a Roman department, or that of the tetrarch, whose business it was to conduct the affairs of the Arameans. The mass of the population of the great cities of northern Galilee would transact their business in their native tongue, and the rules and regulations of the department would have to be issued in the language they knew. This is my romantic idea of the character and the position of the man who would be chosen to follow Jesus according to the plan of the Herodians and the Pharisees.

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[4] "Hellenism," *loc. cit.*, II, 2013.

There are more ways than one of approaching this matter of the Herodians setting a spy on the track of Jesus. We have placed our views of one of Greek descent, speaking Aramaic fluently, as the selected man. But second thoughts bring me to the notion that he might have been a Roman speaking Greek fluently, whose duty under Herod II would be to deal with the Arameans. This is not out of the way, for we are told that Stoicism was the creed, if not the philosophy, of all the best of the Romans.[5]

Moreover, Dr. W. D. Ross, Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, has pointed out the strain of Stoicism to be found in the writings of a Roman and the Sermon of Jesus. He says: "Seneca has very many sayings which recall the words of Jesus (especially in the Sermon on the Mount)."[6]

Other scholars have noted this, but if there be a difference it is in the explicit thoroughness of the inviolable practice of the precepts. Jesus left no loophole for compromise. If one would be perfect, the precepts had to be steadfastly maintained.

For more than two hundred years this perplexing problem of what is called proto-Mark (or Quelle source) has haunted the minds of the scholars. It was not until Joseph Klausner published his *Jesus of Nazareth* that many of them were aware that there was a history connected with it that should not be overlooked. We learn from him the story of the work of Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768), whose book was published by Lessing in 1778, ten years after the death of the author. These men were two of the earliest to undertake the task of thorough research in regard to the authorship and the origin of the Synoptic Gospels. They came to the conclusion that "there existed in Palestine, previous to the composition of the present Gospels, an account written in Aramaic known as the Gospel 'of the Nazarenes.' . . ."[7]

Klausner, summing up this portion of his chapter on Mark, says: "According to this view, the Synoptic Gospels have one common source—a primitive Gospel composed in Palestine and written in Aramaic."[8]

There still remains the more complex problem of who made the Greek translation of the Aramaic that yielded the first two Gospels. More evidence is required than now exists to convince us of the competence of Mark and Matthew to accomplish this.

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[5] "Stoicism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed.), XXV, 942.

[6] "Stoicism," *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, IV, 4799.

[7] Klausner, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

How is it to be explained that, during the first three days of Jesus' last week in Jerusalem, neither Herodian nor Pharisee warned the authorities that a suspicious reformer was in their midst? We shall see, later on, when we have to deal with Jesus after his arrest, that his enemies were fully aware of his presence in Jerusalem and that they were just biding their time to catch him in conflict with the Roman power.

Having set out to find a reason for the Herodians and Pharisees conniving in a plot against Jesus, we may follow up the imaginary clue of an official spy tracking him by asking what would become of his report. We are justified in thinking that the process of the official departments concerned in this business would be no different at the beginning of this era than it is now. We know that in England reports are made to the Home Office, and in this country to the Department of Justice. And surely we have had instances enough for the past twenty-five years in both countries to assure us that detectives and spies have been used diligently by the departments.

First, let us try to imagine what the instructions would be the spy had to follow when he began his work. This is important because it is overlooked in so many of the works of Gospel scholars that the plot to catch Jesus in his words was actually carried out. He would be told to mingle with the crowds and record any sayings of his that might be construed as inciting the people to revolt. This surely would be the first and most important instruction that would be given to him, for Antipas knew the history of Galilee before he became tetrarch and would be on the alert to check any repetition of what happened when Judas sacked Sepphoris. Many of the Gospel critics agree that when Jesus started his mission, all southern Galilee was seething with discontent and unrest.

In case I overlook this important saying and how it would be considered by the authorities, I should like here to remind the reader that Jesus said, "Love your enemies," which reveals at once that he was in no way in sympathy with the revolt of the Gaulonite. And it is quite reasonable to decide that his knowledge of the history of Galilee was quite sufficient for him to understand that nothing had been gained for the people by hating enemies. My purpose in reminding the reader of this at this point is to draw his attention to the type of spy that recorded the sayings.

Further, to take up the thread of the course we would pursue, we can satisfy ourselves that the work of the spy came to an end when Jesus was crucified. If I am permitted to carry this inquiry so far, I feel confident the reader will desire to know what became of his report. In making an attempt to deal with this problem, it is just as well that we keep in mind that there were two parties, at first, to the plot: one the Herodians, the other the Pharisees; the first political, the second religious. In trying to find the method pursued by the department, according to the instructions given to the spy, we are aware he would have to report to the tetrarch's department that dealt with such affairs. In that case, it would mean one record of the actions of Jesus and also his sayings, the places he visited, the crowds who heard him, and the part that the disciples took in the mission. Would there not also be a second report to be given to the Pharisees? This might have been made by the spy or, on the other hand, it might have been a copy issued by the tetrarch's department.

So if this notion of what happened to the report is worth consideration, we cannot be wrong in deciding that both were written in the language used by Jesus, the speech of the community of southern Galilee. As for the suggestions that have recently been put forward by Gospel scholars, that the report of the mission life of Jesus was in Greek, it would be well to repeat here that the date of Mark is about A.D. 65. From this we may infer that no previous record has been found.

We might carry this investigation of what the spy did with his report much farther. Indeed, it is one of the most vexatious problems to be found in the Gospels, regarding source and in what language it was first made known to the authorities. What would be the next step after the agent delivered his reports to the Herodians and the Pharisees? The tetrarch would do what would be done today. It (or a copy of it) would be forwarded to the central government—in Rome—and that which would be placed in the hands of the Pharisees would find its way to the central religious body in Jerusalem, the high priest and the elders. Here it may be said, in parenthesis, that perhaps this document was the instrument that first prompted the religious council at headquarters to order later the stoning of Stephen, and begin the persecution of the disciples. For it contained, as we can read in the first two Gospels, matter that was alien to the thought of orthodox Jews.

To them the saying "You cannot serve two masters" would mean excluding a messiah.

CHAPTER XIV

THE IDEA OF THE MESSIAH

Here we might pause to ask what Peter understood by the term "messiah" at the time of the Caesarea Philippi incident. It could have had no other meaning for him than that of the "anointed" one, and it is quite probable that the lowliest Hebrew would have in mind the scene of the ceremony of anointing David. This ceremony had been known long before the time of Moses, and it is even practiced at the coronation of a king to this day. But when Jesus asked Peter who the people thought he was, he had not yet been anointed and had not suggested that he would be. Notwithstanding the Pauline notions of spiritual anointment, the evidence of this is clearly set forth in the Gospels. Peter would not know anything about the type of messiah we find described in the Apocryphal book of Enoch.

We shall have cause to quote several authorities upon this problem, notably the renowned Jewish scholar, Joseph Klausner. There are others, too, who have much that is pertinent to say on this matter. We may turn to the article on the messiah in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, contributed by the Reverend George Herbert Box, Davidson Professor of Old Testament Studies in the University of London. He emphasizes in three different instances the idea Peter must have held. Box says:

> . . . The great Judaean prophets of the eighth century connect the salvation of Israel with the rise of a Davidic King, full of Yahweh's spirit, in whom all the energies of Yahweh's transcendental kingship are as it were incarnate.[1]

Further on, he comments upon the references to be found in Jeremiah and Ezekiel concerning the "future David or righteous sprout of David's stem," and adds: "That such passages do not necessarily mean more than that the Davidic dynasty shall be continued in the time of restoration under worthy princes seems clear from the way in which Ezekiel speaks of the prince in xlv, xlvi."

The third comment gives us an idea of what was in the minds of the disciples. Box says: "In popular expectation the national Messiah was to be a scion of the house of David."

There is another way of approach to an understanding of this problem, that has been made intricate by the various interpretations given to it by Christian sects, and here we shall present matter to be found in three of the Gospels.

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[1] *Loc. cit.*, 14th ed., XV, 305.

After the baptism, Mark, Matthew and Luke tell us that Jesus went alone into the wilderness, and there he was tempted by Satan. According to Matthew (4:8-10):

> Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;
>
> And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.
>
> Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

This scene is omitted in Mark's version. But in Luke we find it varying slightly from that in Matthew. The Lucan description of the scene is as follows:

> And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.
>
> And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.
>
> If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.
>
> And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve (4:5-8).

Is this or is this not a complete rejection of the messiahship? Jerusalem was one of the "kingdoms of the world," and to the Jews the most glorious. This should be sufficient to convince any honest inquirer that for Jesus there was only one kingdom for man, and that was the kingdom of God, and his justice. If this interpretation is to be accepted (and so far I have not found a reasoned rebuttal of it), we can assure ourselves that when Jesus said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan," he had not wavered in the slightest degree since he was tempted by the devil.

The most reasonable interpretation of the idea of the messiah is given by Joseph Klausner in his work *From Jesus to Paul*. It must be seriously considered because it comes from the mind of a renowned Jewish scholar who has made a thorough study of the New Testament. Indeed, it might be said that his trilogy upon the Gospels and the Epistles is invaluable for the student. Klausner reminds us that, according to Acts, Jesus "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem." He then goes on to add an explanation of the crisis, which is of great importance:

> . . . The revelation of the Messiah as the king who shall restore the kingdom to Israel is a mystery with which the disciples are not permitted to concern themselves; what the disciples can and must do now is to propagate Christianity first in Jerusalem, then in all Judea and in Samaria, and afterwards even "unto the uttermost part of the earth," *i.e.* in the whole vast world empire of Rome. There is here a clear indica-

> tion that shortly after the crucifixion the disciples of Jesus decided to give up the politico-national Messianic conception of the Jews, which involved a certain danger in the Roman Empire on account of its revolutionary implications, and to devote themselves solely to the propagation of the primitive Christian Messianic idea, which was abstract, mystical, and entirely spiritual—first in Palestine and afterwards in all the world.[2]

There had been many changes in the plans of how the Israelites were to be governed, since Moses expressed the desire for a kingdom of priests. This came to naught after the failure of the Judges to maintain an orderly State. Then came three messiahs—"anointed ones"—and after 120 years of their rule, the conditions were in such a lamentable state that the people cried out piteously to the fourth messiah—Rehoboam—for bread:

> Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee (I Kings 12:4).

We should gather from Klausner's explanation a reasonable idea of the state of the minds of the disciples when their hopes were shattered by the arrest and trial of Jesus. It was no sudden conversion to the Christian purpose. Indeed, there were no Christians at that time. Doubts had been gathering over a long period, and this seems to be clear in the Gospels: the twelve were a dejected, disappointed group before they neared the neighborhood of Jerusalem.

Coincidence has played a prominent role in certain dramas of the Old and New Testaments, and the story of finding the ass to be ridden by Jesus is only one of many we have noted. This one has, however, a significance of greater import than any of the others we could mention. To name a few: the crossing of the Red Sea and Jordan; the earthquakes happening just when they were needed; the meeting of Moses and Aaron; the shepherd-harpist and the evil spirit in the breast of Saul. But two occurred on the last journey Jesus took to Jerusalem—the one about the finding of the ass and the other that he should reach there at the time of the Passover.

I have not found a reasonable excuse given by any of the scholars for the demonstration of the villagers in greeting Jesus when he rode into Bethany. How it could have arisen without advance notice, no one has attempted to say. The disciples must have been with Jesus. There is no note that informs us that they went before, to prepare the way and announce his coming. We may ask if these distracted men, fearful of what would happen, were in the mood for a demonstration that would be regarded suspiciously by the Roman authorities. The prophecy of a messiah riding upon an ass (Zechariah 9:9) was, according to Robert Pfeiffer, inserted in the Zechariah story

[2] *From Jesus to Paul*, pp. 211-12.

between 330-200 B.C. by an anonymous author. Zechariah had lived two hundred years before that time. No matter how we look at it, it must be regarded as a strange coincidence, and stranger still that Jesus himself acted upon the prophecy.

Fifty years ago, the earnest student of the first two Gospels raised questions about the peculiar necessity of fulfilling the prophecies. He wondered why this was necessary in the case of Jesus, and many of them were convinced that it was not of much concern to the orthodox Jew. The best that could be said of the fulfillment of prophecy was that it was necessary for the Christian propaganda. These stumbling blocks to a realistic conception of the crusade of conversion of the Gentiles were wholly Christian and not of any consequence to the orthodox Jew.

It must not be considered nowadays that the people who raised these questions were eager to belittle or controvert what they read in Mark and Matthew. That would be an utterly false notion to harbor. They were intent upon giving reason to the opposition for the seeming necessity of fulfilling the prophecies. And it must be regarded by present-day readers that the Gentiles asked for proof from those who taught the Pauline doctrine, which did not exist until after Peter and some of the other disciples were converted to the mystical idea of Paul. The dates that have been agreed upon by most of the Gospel scholars are quite sufficient for us to determine the period (perhaps quite a full generation after the death of Jesus) when this work was done.

Some of the critics found it hard to accept the story of riding the ass into Jerusalem because it would certainly have aroused the suspicions of the authorities and, further, it was quite unlikely that Jesus would have taken a step that would provoke their vigilance. There can be no doubt that he was fully conscious of the danger. Indeed, he warned the disciples of it. Still, there is this to be said about it, that in some way not revealed, the villagers knew a prophet was on the way, and they went out to meet him.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the citizens were astonished and asked who the visitor was. The reply they received conveyed no notion that he was a messiah. The people answered: "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee" (Matt. 21:11). There was no intervention at the gate or in the street of the city, and when evening drew nigh, he was permitted to leave and spend the night at Bethany. What, then, are we to understand by the unconcern of those he and his disciples feared? Why was he permitted to go to the Temple? Where were the Pharisees and the Herodians? This is hard to account for, but how are we to regard what happened when he was in the Temple? We read:

> And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

> And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves (Matt. 21:12-13).

This is the first instance recorded of his taking strong action. His indignation at what he saw was enough to provoke any devout Jew. Had he trespassed against his own counsel: "Resist not evil"? Many years ago this was a subject of debate in the Bible societies of the working classes. Perhaps there is a limit to the evil that a saint can tolerate. It is still an open question (and I doubt that it will ever be settled to the satisfaction of the controversialists). The version of this scene to be found in John was cited by some critics as proof that Jesus, on this occasion, became violent and with "a scourge of small cords, drove them all out of the temple."

This version does not appear in the other three Gospels. But the most astonishing part of this extraordinary scene is that there was no retaliation, and he was permitted to leave the city. A critic I read some years ago pointed out that what occurred in the Temple was no concern of the Roman authorities, and that the offenses of the moneychangers and the vendors of doves were carried on against the protests of the pious. We know that the high priest, Caiaphas, was interested in the traffic—at least so it has been made out by some of the scholars, and the privilege enjoyed by the business men was granted by him. These two astonishing events which happened on his first day in Jerusalem can scarcely be reconciled with the tenets of his philosophy of the kingdom of God.

Was that night at Bethany the first one during the whole mission when he found bed and food in a house? In Mark we read that the disciples went with him, but they are not mentioned in this connection by Matthew. What became of the crowds that hailed him when he entered Jerusalem is not told. They seem to have melted into thin air. But as they were villagers gathered from about Bethany and Bethpage, they perhaps took fright and fled from the city when Jesus expelled the moneychangers and dove sellers from the Temple.

The scenes that followed at the Temple brought about a discussion of what authority he had for his actions. The debate with the chief priests and Pharisees leaves us at a loss to understand why he was permitted to return to the Temple after the experiences of the first day. Were they afraid of him? They knew that he was Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, and the Pharisees, with the Herodians, had kept an eye not only on his movements but had noted his speeches also. Matthew says: "But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet" (21:46).

After another stormy scene in the Temple denouncing the Scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites, a climax was reached, and his opponents decided on taking action: "And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him" (Matt. 26:4).

In all this that occurred in the first three days in Jerusalem, we search in vain in the Gospels for a line that indicates a knowledge on the part of the people or the authorities at the Temple that he was the messiah of the prophecies. To them the prophet of Nazareth was a person of no authority who interfered with their business and used strong language to his superiors.

After studying for many years the works of eminent Bible scholars of various schools, I have found three separate, distinct avenues of approach to an understanding of the New Testament. (1) The first is the Jewish one, for it was originally addressed to them. (2) The second is the theological or supernatural, which is Christian, and could not have been adopted until after the death of Jesus. Most of the scholars I have read incline to the notion that all three Gospels were adapted to the spiritual needs of the early Church. (3) The third way is the historical or realistic one.

It is in this one that most of the controversial problems have arisen, and the differences of opinion among the scholars are in striking contrast to those of the theologians. Yet, it must be admitted that many of the latter have paid their respects to the historians and grant that the service they have rendered has been of great value.

The story of a messiah is a Jewish one. They had looked for and expected one since the early days of the prophets. This was a complete change from the Mosaic idea of Israel being a kingdom of priests. When they abandoned that for a political kingdom, ruled by a king, they found the change was not one for the better. The prediction of Samuel when the people asked for Saul might be applied to every anointed one who followed him. This process of christianizing the hope of the Jews for a messiah is only vaguely touched upon in the Epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles. The transformation from a political one to a supernatural one altered the whole conception the Jews had held of one of the Davidic line appearing to redeem and save Israel.

At this point, a deep line of demarcation separated the Jewish messiah from the Christian one. It should be understood when dealing with this problem (which has been the cause of many vexed debates) that it was not any of the disciples who were directly responsible for this change; it was Saul of Tarsus. Where, then, shall we look in the Gospels for evidence that the Jews ever imagined that the messiah they awaited would be a Galilean? There is not a line in the four Gospels that indicates in the slightest way that a Judean looked to Galilee to produce one.

The story told in the Fourth Gospel concerning Jesus as a Galilean is Christian. The writer of the Gospel of John lived, at the earliest, three generations after the death of Jesus, when the young Church was absorbing people of various mystical ideas. In discussing this investigation, it should be necessary for the student to consider it axiomatic that allegories, hallucinations (such as the visits of angels to men), mystical longings and fanciful metaphors must be considered separately from what is economic and political. No matter whether a man be a nomad or a settler with a fixed abode, he can produce what is necessary for his sustenance without any ritualistic creed. Whether he raises cattle or sheep or cereals, he can do so if he be a skeptic as simply and as easily as one who is a religious devotee. It is essential in our inquiry that these two ideas should be kept apart, which will in no way belittle the desire of those who have mystical yearnings for the spiritual needs.

No Christian interpretation of Jesus as a messiah can possibly satisfy a Jew. Therefore, if we are to grasp the full significance of the trial, we must look upon the accused as a Jew *and* a Galilean Jew. When we turn to Joseph Klausner's third book of his trilogy, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, we find this matter put in the clearest terms. He says:

> The Jewish Messiah is a redeemer strong in physical power and in spirit, who in the final days will bring complete redemption, economic and spiritual, to the Jewish people—and along with this, eternal peace, material prosperity, and ethical perfection to the whole human race.
>
> The Jewish Messiah is truly human in origin, of flesh and blood like all mortals. Justin Martyr in his time put this clearly into the mouth of Trypho the Jew, thus: "We Jews all expect that the Messiah will be a man of purely human origin." This human conception of the Messiah remains normative in Judaism to this day. . . .[3]

When one sets out to trace the messianic idea in the Scriptures, it would be well to proceed with caution and, as Klausner tells us in his invaluable examination of this conception of rule, we should investigate with scrutiny and penetrate as deeply as we can into the problem of its origin. The eminent Jewish Bible scholar astonishes the reader by throwing off a suggestion that the messianic hope can be traced back to the Pentateuch.

When we consider the matter of installing a messiah, we are reminded that a high priest performs the ceremony by anointing the chosen one upon the head with a sacred oil. In vain, we search for a shred of evidence that such a one was anointed in Jerusalem during the lifetime of Jesus; and our reading convinces us that, under the domination of the Romans and under a Herodian tetrarch in Galilee, one who came to give good tidings to the poor and needy, the meek and humble, would never be welcomed.

Klausner admits that Saul was the first king to be anointed. But he lays it down emphatically: "the word 'Messiah,' to designate the expected redeemer, *does not occur either in the Holy Scriptures* [Old Testament] *or in the books of the Apocrypha.*"[4]

After such a firm statement, one wonders when and how this grand idea of a redeemer became fixed in the minds of the Jews. Klausner explains further:

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[3] Trans. by W. F. Stinespring, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1956, p. 520.

[4] Italics in original; *ibid.*, p. 8.

> . . . The definition of the Messianic expectation is: *The prophetic hope for the end of this age, in which there will be political freedom, moral perfection, and earthly bliss for the people Israel in its own land, and also for the entire human race. . . .*[5]

In thinking this over, it must occur to the reader that the hope was a heroic one after the hundreds of years of experience of the anointed ones since the days of Saul. But such is man, he persists, generation after generation, in believing that the next trial of a bitter experience may turn out to be a sweet one. When he loses faith in one champion, he seems to be quite ready to place it in another who will use him.

The remarkable fact about the history of the anointed ones is that it has lasted down to our own time. It is one of the most important rites in the coronation of an English sovereign. Indeed, in this connection it may be said that it is a vital canon of the law and custom of the land. When Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, placed the crown upon the head of his Saxon king over a thousand years ago, he was as near to Klausner's conception as the eminent Jewish scholar could desire.

"My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). How, then, can anyone think that Jesus claimed to be a messiah of any kind? How there can be any doubt about this defies elucidation. The conjectures of Klausner and others who think with him concerning payment of tribute to Caesar are a patent contradiction, but they do not seem to realize it. "You cannot serve two masters," and "you should love your enemies" are not for Caesar's world. Nor, let it be said frankly, are they for our world. There is nothing in the philosophy of Jesus for political systems. His appeal is directed to the individual, not to groups, who are shackled by the fiscal systems and restrictive laws of the State. But the individual may, if he desires, withdraw from Caesar's world and live his own life—if he forgets self and is content with the necessaries for subsistence; producing his own food, and giving his leisure to contemplation. Millions have done this through the ages, but only man by man. It was done at Bec; it was done at Cluny. The decay of monastic life led to grave consequences. But the Orders did not terminate at the end of the Middle Ages; nor did the French Revolution put an end to them.

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[5] Italics in original; *ibid.*, p. 9.

CHAPTER XV

THE LAST JOURNEY

The mission had failed. The call to seek the kingdom of God had fallen on deaf ears. Injustice had done its evil work through long centuries. Hunger had eaten into the minds of the meek and lowly. Its pang, like an absolute dictator, dominated all, and exacted every demand. Lingering death based on withering hopes seemed to them preferable to direct action which would put an end to their misery. The promise of inhabiting a land of milk and honey, where they would eat bread without scarceness, wilted and died before they chose their first king.

We are not told anything about the results of baptism. Whether or not the people really repented is not shown by their actions at any time during the mission. The crowds that followed Jesus from place to place were drawn by the sensational reports of the miracles. Healing the sick, exorcising devils, and raising the dead would undoubtedly bring many to see and hear him. John the Baptist had exclaimed, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And the proclamation of Jesus, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice," were appeals to their spiritual conditions, but these failed to impress them. Mark and Matthew are silent concerning any change of thought or habit in those who were baptized.

Now, in what way could they have shown a desire to seek the kingdom of God? Penury had left them well-nigh helpless, and their minds were in no mood to think of anything but their earthly lot. Jesus had said, "Resist not evil," and that could mean nothing but "Resist not evil by evil means." The State had resisted evil in such a way without success.

Was it possible for a group of defenseless villagers "to take arms against a sea of troubles and end them"? The idea is impossible. What course, then, could be taken to bring about the kingdom of God? A sudden conversion to seek it and His justice would be the only possible method to pursue, but perhaps that would mean less to eat and more violence. No matter from what point of view we try to find a solution of this perplexing problem, we are forced at last to decide that the philosophy of Jesus, in its entirety, was not for groups, not for any action against the injustices of the State. It was purely and simply one for the individual, and that, perhaps, is the reason why there was no response to it. In the history of the Jews collective action had failed to mend matters.

Before the last visit to Judea, Jesus realized that his mission was coming to an inglorious end. He had left Capernaum for the last time. There was no welcome for him at Nazareth. Galilee gave him no hope, and Samaria rejected him. On his journey south, he turned towards Decapolis. At this stage, we may ask ourselves, what were the disciples thinking of it all? For we must assume that they were constantly with him after the failure of their mission. What did they expect? They undoubtedly looked for a great change to take place on earth, to relieve them and the people of their hardships. It is a sad story of defeat, and how Jesus endured those days, followed here and there by twelve disappointed men, can only be imagined by those whose most cherished hopes have been turned to bitter defeat.

Here we must ask ourselves the pertinent question of why Jesus went to Jerusalem. Why did he walk right into the very trap set by his enemies? There is no verse in the Gospel that we can accept, which indicates his intention was to celebrate the Passover. If the full time of the mission was two years, he had had two opportunities of going to Jerusalem for the feast, if he desired to do so. But the reason for this visit is given in John, where we read that Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, sent word to Jesus that their brother, whom he loved, was ill (11:1-2). Where Jesus was at that time is not clearly indicated in the Gospels. On one map,[1] which traces the journeyings of Jesus, it is shown that he was at Bethabara. There is nothing of this in the first two Gospels. Indeed, neither mentions Lazarus. Two versions of the story are found in Luke and John. Another difficulty in this matter of following the movements of Jesus is to reconcile the different versions in the Gospels of his visits to Jerusalem. Some of them mention two; others only one.

Yet, it scarcely seems possible that Mary and Martha would send all the way from Bethany to Bethabara for Jesus to visit their brother. In all these journeyings we must keep in mind that they were made on foot, and it is at least three days' journey from Bethabara to Bethany. We need not deal with the Lazarus story itself, because the Bible experts and the scholars do not accept it as historical. However, it is pertinent to this investigation, for it is the only note that we can find that does give a reason for Jesus going near Jerusalem.

In the first three Gospels we learn nothing about miracles during the last journey to Jerusalem, until Jesus reaches Judea. What happened on the journey from Galilee, whether he went straight through Samaria or turned east through Perea, is not revealed. There is a gap there that needs filling. But none of the scholars has attempted to suggest what is missing in the story. I admit it is not easy for any student to put together a coherent account of the reasons why he went to the neighborhood of Jerusalem. We know from the writers of the Gospels that he was fully aware of the danger, and predicted what would happen.

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[1] C. S. Hammond, *Atlas of the Bible Lands*, Maplewood, New Jersey, 1956, "Journeys of Christ," p. B-25.

Therefore, we are obliged to fall back upon the story as it is told by John: the message sent by the women of Bethany to Jesus about the illness of their brother. But this is not mentioned by Mark or Matthew. However, there is some reason for considering what the fourth evangelist has to say about it, for if Jesus were at Bethabara, he would go south by the east side of Jordan and approach Jerusalem through Jericho. In some ways this falls in with the story told in the other three Gospels.

The outstanding event after he reached Jericho took place somewhere in Judea, where he gave sight to two blind men (Matt. 20:34). When we consider not only the gaps in the story but some of the conflicting descriptions of it, we wonder how the people of simple villages like Bethany and Bethpage were prepared to meet a "messiah." It is remarkable, when one ponders this problem, how quickly in those days the report spread and brought crowds to follow him long distances.

Therefore, we are obliged to put a reasonable estimate upon the size of a crowd of that day, for it was the people of the villages who gathered about him. It must be admitted that those who put together the Gospels realized that the time was ripe for a sensational change.

Many Jews would be on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Still, no matter how we regard this, we have no evidence that helps us to understand why the crowds were prepared to welcome a "messiah." There is a passage in Acts concerning this that is not to be found in the Gospels, and it may help us to appreciate the conflict of ideas that gathered round Jesus at this time. It concerns the restoration of the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6).

That such a question should be put to Jesus after the resurrection is as strange as it is unexpected. Indeed, it reads as if it might have been put to him before the trial took place, possibly at a time when the minds of the disciples were in a turmoil of doubt and fright. Some of the critics reject the story because it seems so utterly out of place. Where and when this meeting occurred is not revealed, but later we shall deal with the various reports of the movements of the disciples after the crucifixion. How they could hope for a restoration of the Davidic line and a messiah reigning in Jerusalem, whether there were Christians there or not, is something that has not been dealt with by the critics.

No one has suggested who the reporter was of the first document of the crusade of Jesus, for most of the critics agree that the Aramaic version was either lost or destroyed. The conjecture that I have made in a former chapter is as good as any I have read. The only difficulty about it lies in the fact that the first report of the Aramaic would be sent to Herod Antipas, for the first years of the mission were spent in Galilee and its neighborhood. The tetrarch of the province would legally be the recipient of the report, and perhaps that was the reason why a Greek version was made from the Aramaic.

If this be a reasonable way of working out the problem, it presents us with a further one. That is, whether Antipas, who was no friend of Pilate, would take the trouble to send the report to Jerusalem after Jesus left the neighborhood of Galilee. In that case, how would the procurator of Judea learn of the activities of Jesus and the disciples after they left the southern border of Samaria or, let us say, the country east of Jordan, Perea? Perhaps it would be too much to expect that the reporter who followed Jesus during the early time of the mission would be permitted by his department to go as far south as Judea.

Passages in Greek and in Roman histories inform us that there were restrictions and limits put upon agents and spies similar to those that are imposed today. They work within the limits of the district in which they are employed. Is it reasonable, then, to think that the Herodians and Pharisees would make a request to Pilate similar to the one that had been made to Antipas for a spy who spoke Aramaic to follow Jesus? He would have to speak Aramaic fluently. But presumably a report in this language to Pilate would not serve unless it were translated, for the procurator had not been in Jerusalem long enough to study the dialect of the people.

Here our inquiry points to another translation made into Latin for the Roman authorities. We might pause for a moment or two to remind the reader that there is rather a large library of apocryphal literature, very seldom mentioned by the scholars, that presumes to give an almost word-for-word account of what happened during that last week in Jerusalem. Some of the stories are so far-fetched—and many of these supposed to be taken from documents found in the Vatican and other very early libraries—that one may be forgiven for imagining that any author of skill in the Middle Ages might have concocted them from scraps of information from the Jewish literature of the days of the Talmud.

There is a hinterland of philosophy, as the educated people of Rome knew it, that should be recorded. Neither Cicero nor Tiberius was a Christian. They were pagans in the full meaning of the term. Cicero stands out as the one Roman whose spiritual ideas could be classed as Stoic. As for Seneca, notwithstanding all that has been said of his opportunism, he knew the world and described it as he saw it.

Perhaps we may remark, without apologetics, that the mind of a philosopher may be lodged in that of a politician who is in the world and of it. There are many instances of this even down to our day—Arthur Balfour, for example, to mention only one whose actions in Ireland were the very antithesis of the ideas expressed in his Gifford Lectures, *The Foundations of Belief*. Political action and moral conditions have never yet linked arms.

No critic of this period has suggested that Pilate was a political fool.

He was the agent of imperial Rome, not the nominee of an altruistic coterie. If a report was delivered to him of the sayings and events of the missioners, he would be impressed with the fact that there was nothing in it that meant violence.

He would not waste a moment's consideration upon the stories of healing the sick, expelling evil spirits, restoring sight to weak eyes and other curative wonders, for such persons existed long before the time of Jesus. Many such cases are mentioned in the Old Testament; also in the apocryphal literature of the Jews. His mind would be given to the philosophy, and he would quickly decide that it could make little or no impression upon the people who heard him deliver it. Anything else would be of a religious nature that was not his concern.

CHAPTER XVI

JUDAS ISCARIOT

The story of the Last Supper and the night in Gethsemane is unequaled in poignancy by any other drama in our literature. The intuition of Jesus regarding his betrayer is not singular. There were several examples of it before he started on the last journey. He knew he was preaching a doctrine inimical to all political authority, and the only reason why he was permitted to spend two years teaching crowds was that the authorities were aware that those who heard him, including his own disciples, showed neither interest in his good tidings nor, indeed, understood his message.

The intuition that came to him about his betrayer opens up the question of what caused Jesus to suspect Iscariot. The Gospels give such meager information about this disciple that we feel there must have been some reason for saying little about him. There were others of the twelve that played no important part in the mission; but somehow in the case of the betrayer, the silence is significant. Perhaps it would be carrying imagination too far to suggest that he might have been the spy the Herodians and Pharisees selected early in the mission for the purpose of reporting to them any seditious sayings of Jesus.

Some of the critics seem to be convinced that Iscariot was a Judean and that the other eleven were Galileans. Guignebert devotes many pages in his book, *Jesus*, to a thorough examination of the betrayer. He submits to minute examination the events as they are recorded in the first three Gospels. Indeed, his survey of the proceedings is elaborate and extensive. The significant factor he points out is that Iscariot himself goes to the high priest and

> offers to deliver his Master to them. Mark says that they promise money, but Matthew xxvi. 14-16 goes further and says that he asked for it. Luke xxii. 3-6 adds the final explanation: "*Then Satan entered into Judas*."
>
> The question arises whether this base and hateful story of betrayal springs from actual reminiscence. The narrative of the prediction made during the Last Supper of Judas' betrayal has already raised doubts; it sounds too much like the fulfilment of a prophecy, and common-sense reflection confirms them. It is difficult to see why the Iscariot's crime was necessary for the accomplishment of the evil designs of the "Chief High Priests."[1]

It is well that this should be pointed out, for the repeated statements of fulfilling prophecies ascribed to Jesus in these final scenes have the stamp of after-thoughts, which were molded by the editors of Mark and Matthew long after the crucifixion took place. These raise a doubt as to whether they were in the original Aramaic or not.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 451.

Was it necessary for the fulfillment of a prophecy for Iscariot to betray Jesus? We hope to show later that it was merely an incident that in no way changed the course of events which finally brought Jesus before Pilate. Iscariot's one act of vital consequence took place in the Garden of Gethsemane when he kissed his master.

When we turn to Joseph Klausner's account of the role that Iscariot played, we find an entirely different emphasis given to the betrayer. Klausner in his work, *Jesus of Nazareth*, exceeds other critics in space and detail in his examination of the scene at the Last Supper and the reasons why Iscariot took action against his master.

The renowned Jewish scholar sets before us views that have not been considered in this matter by any of the Christian authors I have read. Some of them are so foreign to the conceptions of Bible scholars that I must devote some space to them.

He starts out with his own notion of an Iscariot unknown to Guignebert. He says:

> . . . Judas Iscariot . . . was, apparently, the only disciple-Apostle who came from Judaea, namely from Kerioth, south of Hebron, . . . all the others being Galilaeans. Legend gives to Jesus a foreknowledge of what Judas Iscariot was to do, though it is clear that had Jesus known that he was capable of betraying him, he would never have given him a place among the disciples.[2]

This is assuming much for which we have no hint in the Gospels. We have not a line about any action or speech of Iscariot until we reach the last days in Jerusalem. Now, suppose he was a Judean and traveled all the way from Kerioth to Galilee to become a disciple. He might then have been a sincere believer in what he had heard of the philosophy of Jesus. In granting this, we are quite aware that the news from the neighborhood of Capernaum must have traveled speedily to reach a place in Judea, near Gaza. He might have been accepted in the early days of the mission and have caused no suspicion by any act or statement for a year or more before the premonition of his change of mind came to Jesus.

Klausner's presentation of the character of Iscariot borders on the sensational, and how he conceives such a person joining a band of simple men, all looking for a messiah, an "anointed one," is a mystery. Here is Klausner's portrait:

> Judas was an educated Judaean with a keen intellect but a cold and calculating heart, accustomed to criticise and scrutinise; his knowledge of the frailties blinded him to the many virtues of Jesus, virtues which

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[2] Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 285.

> at first had so impressed him and aroused his enthusiasm. It was otherwise with the other disciples, all alike uneducated Galilaeans, dull of intellect but warm-hearted. . . .[3]

Why was it necessary to betray Jesus to the religious authorities at the Temple? What was the count against him? It is not stated clearly in the Gospels. He had on three occasions offended the high priest and the elders. They had seen him and had spoken to him. They knew him by sight. What, then, was the offense he had committed that Iscariot reported to them?

Klausner's list of reasons why Iscariot turned against his master is surprisingly trivial. Indeed, we might say in considering them that neither Iscariot, nor Klausner himself, has grasped the philosophy Jesus was teaching. Now one of the reasons for betraying Jesus this renowned Jewish scholar mentions is:

> Judas Iscariot became convinced that here was a false Messiah or a false prophet, erring and making to err, a beguiler and one who led astray, one whom the Law commanded to be killed, one to whom the Law forbade pity or compassion or forgiveness. Till such time as Jesus divulged his messianic claims to the disciples at Caesarea Philippi, Judas had not thought to find in Jesus more than might be found in any Pharisaic Rabbi or, at the most, in a Jewish prophet. . . .[4]

I hope that in the earlier part of this work I demonstrated clearly that Jesus repudiated all claims to messiahship. "Get thee behind me, Satan" is what he said to Peter when that disciple mentioned the word. As to being a "false Messiah," that must have been an idea which arose in the mind of Klausner himself, for there is not a line in the three Gospels that indicates the notion that Judas Iscariot joined the band because he thought Jesus was the messiah.

But what had that matter to do with the chief priests and elders at the Temple? They were not concerned about such claims, for they had known the history of the "false messiahs" who had perished in their attempts to reform the economic woe of the people. Many of the points raised by Klausner are as far-fetched as some of the stories he criticizes so severely in Matthew and Mark.

Jesus taught the good tidings of the coming of the kingdom of God, and His justice. That is what he set out to do, and it is firmly established in the first words that he had with John the Baptist when he reached Jordan. This was the Gospel, and no other. What place, then, can be found for a messiah, a stem of Jesse of the Davidic line, in the kingdom of God? A political messiah serves two masters at best—God and Mammon—and no government can exist without the tribute gathered from the people. Indeed, it is based upon legalized theft. They make their own laws for taking what does not belong to them—the wealth that others have produced. And all this is done to maintain law and order. Jesus, however, desired to change all that by teaching men they should seek the kingdom of God. And where else could it be than within man himself?

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 325.

[4] *Ibid.*

Now none of this, of course, can appeal to one who is looking for a political messiah. I presume such a one would say to himself, "Ah, that can never be for this world, which is put in motion by practical men. We must look hard facts in the face and deal with the realities of the system, whether we like it or not." That is what the world has said ever since, and all the cities and all the kingdoms offered to Jesus have piled rubble and sand over the great practical men who built them.

The imaginations of the scholars of all schools concerning the events of this last tragic week have been stretched about as far as they can go without solving some of its most important problems and without finding any one factor upon which they can agree. It is so in regard to Iscariot; it is so in regard to the scenes in the Temple. The problem of deciding what was the offense charged by Judas when he went to the high priest and elders has never been established, and it is not likely that it will be, so long as the methods pursued by Guignebert and Klausner are practiced. There are other fields open for inquiry, but alas there is little in the Gospels to help us in this. We have to call on imagination again, overworked as it has been and will be.

We may take it that Iscariot was a member of the twelve when Jesus sent them on their mission, which was a hopeless failure. We know very little about it, but the area perhaps covered by the twelve was in and about the west portion of Galilee. We do not hear that any of them entered a town, so we judge that their work must have been in the villages. He sent them out two by two. How long they were away from him is not told, and on their return we hear very little of repentance, but much about miracles performed by the twelve.

If the Pharisees and the Herodians had firmly decided upon a plan to catch him, the time for putting it into motion was when they were moving about in pairs, perhaps as far north as the villages of Tyre and Sidon and Caesarea Philippi. Would not this be an excellent opportunity for an emissary of his enemies to sound out one of the disciples, with the object of learning if he was satisfied with the master and the mission? Who was more likely to be the one selected than the educated man from Judea? If he were all that Klausner thinks he was, he would not enter heart and soul into the mission as simple Galilean peasants would do.

Moreover, the description of Iscariot does not seem to fit in with the reports of miracles performed by simple men. Surely to him it would seem that the crowds who received them were stirred by the marvelous doings far more than by the call to repentance. Hence, there would be some doubt or dissatisfaction concerning the efficacy of the work. Would it not then be easy for a shrewd spy to single him out as one who might be suborned and given the job of reporting to the authority any seditious speech that Jesus would make?

The Bible student might comb the verses of Mark and Matthew for a saying or an incident savoring of overt sedition, and find nothing that could have been used by Iscariot. There is nothing of violence in the beatitudes, nothing in the precepts. The Sermon on the Mount is clear of anything that might have brought Jesus into collision with the Roman authorities. It is true he made critical remarks about the Pharisees, and Klausner has taken him to task for this. But there was nothing malicious in them. He merely pointed out that they did things his hearers should not do. They made prayers in public and disfigured their faces (Matt. 6:16). Therefore, he advised them to be meek and humble, to pray unobserved "in secret."

Some of the critics cannot have it both ways. Jesus without the frailties of the flesh would not be human. The prophet of Nazareth was a man, and so conscious of the weaknesses the mind and spirit are heir to that he revealed repeatedly how they might be suppressed. To present him as the personification of human perfection is to invent a figure that does not exist in the Gospels. Perfection ("Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" [Matt. 5:48]) was the ultimate aim of those who sought the kingdom of God.

The Roman authorities were not interested in a religious charge against Jesus. And that they had not yet found a political cause for placing him under arrest is made plain in the first three Gospels. It is vital to an understanding of the plot to trap him that we should compare the reports in the Gospels of how it was planned and carried out. The Bible scholars seem to have shirked the task of dealing searchingly with this all-important matter.

I admit it is not easy to put the sequence of events in order or to explain the attitude of his enemies in delaying his arrest after the test that was made concerning the payment of tribute. Perhaps it would be best to set out in full the information that is contained in the first three Gospels of the scenes and movements that took place before he was brought before Pilate. There are three different versions of the same story. The substance of it, as narrated in Mark, is as follows:

> And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.
>
> And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?
>
> Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it.

> And they brought it, And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's.
>
> And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him (Mk. 12:13-17).

This story substantiates the idea that I have held from the first that the trap the Pharisees and the Herodians would lay for him would be directly connected with the question of tribute and tax. Now this reply has suffered so much in interpretation from the Bible scholars that a wholly false meaning has been given to it. Many of them would make out that it was a matter of so little importance that tax and tribute could be paid without protest.

To consider the reply of Jesus as unimportant is to rob the drama of the very core of the plot of his enemies. Surely it will be admitted that they had reliable evidence of his firm conviction that it was impossible to serve two masters. Not only that; indeed, on many occasions he had declared that there was only one Ruler of the universe.

To suggest that the authors who belittle his reply may be excused on the ground of finding it expedient to avert a political issue is to raise doubts as to their integrity as Bible historians. But how can one regard the attitude of two of the leading scholars of our time—Guignebert and Klausner? The former treats the matter thus:

> . . . He [Jesus] did not raise the question since it did not interest him to bring about a revolution in a dying world. His attitude was that of a prophet who is not concerned with the contingent. The Roman tribute can be endured like hunger and thirst, as being an external necessity which has no bearing on the true life.[5]

If this were true, it would indicate that Jesus did not mean what he said when he told men they cannot serve God and Mammon. Joseph Klausner's notion of the reply is a complete surprise, for that renowned Jewish scholar had the history of the background of the whole matter at his fingertips. Yet, he says:

> Jesus saw that it would be dangerous to say that tribute should not be paid: he would have been promptly arrested as a rebel. . . .
>
> It was a clever rejoinder: he did not oppose the payment of tribute and so was no rebel against the Government. . . .[6]

In making this statement, Klausner, at a stroke, seems to strip Jesus of the robes of the prophet and make him a paltry sham. To me, it is a grievous sin to shirk the issue in this matter.

We shall now turn to Matthew and Luke and read what they have told

[5] *Jesus*, p. 386.

[6] Klausner, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

us of the way his enemies received the reply. Matthew says: "When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way" (Matt. 22:22).

But in Luke we read something about the attitude of those who questioned him, that is rather different from the versions given by Mark and Matthew. Luke's description is as follows: "And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace" (Lk. 20:26).

What has led some of the critics astray in dealing with this declaration is to be found in the words "and [they] left him, and went their way" and more so, "And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace," as we find the words in Luke.

The fact that they did not take immediate action has been the cause of an utterly false notion having been given to the very spring of the trap that was laid for him. Many of the critics seem to think that Jesus recanted. That such an idea is groundless can be shown by re-reading in Luke how his enemies determined to catch him and report him to the authorities. This is omitted in Matthew and Mark, but as it is told in Luke, it appeals to the reason, for the method of procedure seems real to us. The passage is as follows:

> And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.
>
> And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor (Lk. 20:19-20).

How can anyone doubt the firm belief of his enemies that he was an opponent of the system of tribute and taxation?

Time intervals in many of the stories in the Gospels are so shortened in the telling that it is difficult for us to find a reason why in certain cases immediate action was not taken. Here in this instance the time interval after his reply is passing strange. Whether it took place in the morning or the afternoon, we cannot tell, but for Jesus to plan with his disciples the evening meal, and for it all to be arranged without interruption, puts the imagination under a strain. The interchanges that take place between Jesus and the elders and others of the Temple are given much space. But these stand apart from the main story, as if the editors were padding. It is not until after these colloquies that we come upon the next event of prime importance in the drama of these last days.

It is an amazing story of how the Last Supper was arranged. Before reading it, students might have thought that it was to take place at the home of the women at Bethany, and that it would be a simple Passover meal. It was, however, something quite different. Mark tells us:

> And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?
>
> And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.
>
> And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?
>
> And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.
>
> And the disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.
>
> And in the evening he cometh with the twelve (Mk. 14:12-17).

After the scene in the Temple, Jesus was at liberty to return to Bethany, for in all likelihood he was there when he instructed his disciples to go into Jerusalem and find a place for the celebration of the Passover meal.

He was fearless. To venture into the city again, and in the evening of the day of such trials as he had endured in the Temple against his enemies astounds us. There is nothing quite like this in the history of heroes. Moreover, he knew when the meal was planned that one of the twelve would betray him. With this knowledge he partook of the meal without any show of displeasure or anger. The pity of it! To break bread with one who had been a disciple and who had planned to betray him seems to us as if tolerance exceeded all limits.

When the meal was over and night had come, they left the city and found their way to Gethsemane.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CHARGES AGAINST JESUS

Jesus at the Last Supper did not name his betrayer. When they asked, "Is it I?" he gave them no specific answer. The only clue we have to the betrayer in this scene is given in Mark, where Jesus says: "It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish" (Mk. 14:20). We are not told whether this happened. If it did, the eleven would have known the false one.

When Jesus and the disciples left the house where they had partaken of the Passover meal, the twilight had deepened. In making their way to an eastern gate to leave the city, it would not be difficult for Iscariot to hang back from the group and make his way to the house of the high priest. He would not be missed, for night was falling, and the eleven disciples were not only fearful of what would befall them, but they were quarreling amongst themselves over matters of precedence.

When they reached the outskirts of the city, they made their way to a garden called Gethsemane, at the foot of the Mount of Olives. Why they went there in preference to returning to Bethany, where they had friends, is not explained, but we can imagine that Jesus, knowing that action of the authorities could not be long delayed, did not wish to compromise the women who had given him hospitality by being arrested at their house.

Of the night Jesus spent at Bethany, Klausner gives the following explanation of the reason why he left the city:

> . . . He felt that both he and his disciples would incur danger by spending the night in Jerusalem. He was aware that he had many enemies and that it was perilous for one who had quarreled with the Pharisees and proclaimed himself Messiah to stay for the night in a great city like Jerusalem, the centre of Roman and Jewish authority. . . .[1]

Few of the scholars have taken time at this point to reflect upon what was happening in the mind of Jesus. He must have suffered tragic moments. It is Klausner who suggests in the above quotation the conflict of ideas, now beset by fears, that disturbed both Jesus and the twelve. It is obvious from Klausner's interpretation that a grave mistake had been made in tactics by going anywhere near Jerusalem. That the situation was desperate cannot be gainsaid, for Jesus undoubtedly knew his associates had not understood in any way the purpose of his mission and that, at the same time, they were utterly bereft of the hopes of the coming of a political messiah. How Jesus endured the spiritual suffering of these hours of certain defeat, no one has tried to explain. Still, he did not flinch nor did he recant. His attitude was that of a sublime martyr doomed to the pyre. Even under heartbreaking disillusion, he held firmly to the truth of his conception of divine justice.

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[1] *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 311.

The garden to which they now were making their way has been described by several authors as an enclosure within a wall. The owner of the place is not mentioned nor why Jesus had free access to it. It was, however, a somewhat isolated spot, a little distance from the city gate. The versions of this story in the first three Gospels differ in some respects. One tells us that he prayed three times; another that he prayed once. According to Matthew, he made three short petitions to be saved the agony, but the three together are no longer than the Lord's Prayer.

The agony of these hours cannot be described. He who had performed miracle after miracle, such as exorcising devils, raising the dead, curing lepers, supplying the wine at Cana and feeding the five thousand, was now helpless to save himself. There is something so real in the Gospel stories of these days in Jerusalem that we wonder why the prophecies had to be fulfilled and why all was happening "according to schemes that were laid hundreds of years before he was born."

The versions in the first three Gospels of the action that took place in the garden differ in some important respects. If Matthew and Luke depended on the source from which the Gospel of Mark was written, it is hard to explain why some details are omitted and others added. It is evident that Jesus and the disciples had not missed Iscariot, for he is not mentioned until he comes with the servants of the high priest, scribes and elders, to take Jesus. The story of the betrayer's kiss is about the same in the three Gospels. In the darkness we presume it would have been impossible for the servants to recognize Jesus. Therefore, it had been planned some time after the Last Supper that Jesus would be identified by Iscariot when he kissed him.

What ensued after the betrayal kiss is not quite clear. There was violence, and one of the disciples drew a sword and cut off the ear of a servant of the high priest. In Luke we learn that Jesus touched the wound and healed it (22:51). This altercation caused some panic among the disciples, and all but Peter fled.

According to Mark, Iscariot had told the servants of the high priest: "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely" (14:44).

He was then led to the house of the high priest, and Peter followed and took a place near the fire, in the servants' quarters, according to Matthew and Mark; but Luke places Peter in the middle of the company. This incident is important because it raises the question of why Peter was not called as a witness. He was detected as a follower of Jesus, and three times he was accused of being associated with him. This he denied three times.

The conduct of the first of the disciples is strange. That he should follow Jesus to the house of the high priest and then deny knowledge of him three times may reveal a mind torn by fear, but it does not fit in with the preliminary trial before the high priest and, afterwards, when Jesus stood before Pilate.

I appreciate the difficulties of some of the critics who have tried to find a way through the confusions in the narratives of the first three Gospels concerning what occurred when Jesus was led to the house of the high priest. The versions differ in many ways, and some of these are peculiarly contradictory. For example, when the high priest asked him if he were the Son of God: "Art thou then the Son of God?" the reply to this, given by Mark, is "I am" (14:62); but in Matthew it is: "Thou hast said" (26:64); and in Luke: "Ye say that I am" (22:70).

According to the Jewish authorities, the term "Son of Man" or "Son of God" refers to man. How anybody reading the three Gospels, and comparing the different versions, can conclude that Jesus thought he was anything higher than a man has not been demonstrated.

What, then, were the reasons for these extraordinary charges and countercharges, and where did the witnesses before the high priest hear such statements? There could have been only one source for this, and that was the acrimonious dispute that was going on, presumably day after day, among the disciples, concerning who was to be the favored one and sit with Jesus in his kingdom.

A special point should be made of this, for later we shall be face to face with the problem of the information Iscariot gave to the high priest and elders that would be considered by them a violation of the Law. We learn in Matthew (20:20) that "the mother of Zebedee's children" asked Jesus: "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom" (20:21).

Here there is no mistaking the notion that she had of his being a political messiah. However, in Mark the story is somewhat different. There we read that James and John, the sons of Zebedee, said unto him: "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory" (10:37). Jesus told them that they did not know what they asked:

> And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.
>
> But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.
>
> But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:
>
> And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all (10:41-44).

How this speech can be construed as a claim on the part of Jesus to be a messiah cannot be explained, for his reply clearly indicates a totally different order of precedence than that which is practiced by political governments. We wonder what Iscariot was thinking of all this and what construction he put upon the replies of Jesus.

The populace in and out of the city knew that he was not announced as a messiah but rather "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee" (Matt. 21:11). There is no mistaking this, and of the people that greeted him, who would expect to find a messiah in a prophet? For they had been so plentiful in Judea that no mistake could be made about his calling.

Why Peter was not called as a witness is not explained. One version tells us that he sat in the midst of the people who were in the council room, and that he was pointed out as a Galilean. Yet, the one man who could have given direct evidence of the claims of Jesus disappears entirely from the tragedy after this night.

The hearing before the high priest, the elders and the council did not provide a case of violation of the religious laws. The witnesses could not agree: "Yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none" (Matt. 26:60). We should take notice here that Jesus asked why they had not laid hands upon him when he discoursed with them in the Temple for three days. This assures us that on these occasions he had not committed an heretical offense. Hard pressed for a reason to condemn him, his judges charged him with blasphemy, and they determined, and the crowd proclaimed, that he was guilty of death.

Many of the scholars have overlooked the fact that no mention is made in the three Gospels of the presence of Herodians and Pharisees at the hearing in the high priest's house. We may ask why they were not on hand to accuse him. The reply to this must be that their charge against him would bear no force, for it was outside the jurisdiction of the high priest and elders.

In these scenes that took place in Jerusalem before he was brought before Pilate, there is so much confusion and contradiction that we are apt to forget about the plot laid by the Pharisees and the Herodians. At this point, a pertinent question may be put. It is this: Is it at all likely that the Aramaic original, from which the first Greek version was translated, contained the Christian insertion concerning prophecies and Pauline interpretations, which could only have been placed in the Gospels long after the time of the crucifixion?

The high priest and elders found him guilty of blasphemy, but it is not at all clear which of his utterances gave offense. Some of the critics have pointed to the use of the terms "Son of Man" and "Son of God." These terms were associated with a pronouncement attributed to Jesus: "I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven'' (Matt. 26:64). This flight of imagination reminds us of the prophecies of Ezekiel, Daniel and certain others that are placed in the Apocrypha. Such would be in the minds of devout Jews. Even if Jesus said such a thing, it could only refer to the coming of a King-messiah. Therefore, we must consider what the high priest and elders thought of the term ''Son of God.''

Bible scholars, in their books, have given us many pages upon this saying, which we meet so often in the Synoptic Gospels. For the most part they agree with the Jewish interpretation of the term. Klausner puts it clearly:

> . . . Jesus always called himself ''the Son of man'' *i.e.*, simple flesh and blood. This usage survived in Hebrew till a much later period: ''Son of man'' signifies mere ''man.''
>
> . . . ''Son of Man,'' in its Hebrew guise, was a regular title given to the Messiah before the time of Jesus. Jesus, who spoke Aramaic, made much use of this word. It occurs eighty-one times in the Gospels. The writers of the Gospels (especially Matthew) have introduced it on many occasions into the actual sayings of Jesus. He did not, however, use it in its *technical sense* but instead of ''I.'' Its significance is often simply ''man,'' without any qualification or specific intention.[2]

In the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* we find a still more emphatic statement: ''A critical study of the synoptic material leads inevitably to the conclusion that Jesus never called himself 'the Son of God,' and never was addressed by that title.''[3] How his religious judges could hold him guilty of blasphemy for using this term cannot be understood, for it must have been on many tongues and was used perhaps by the high priests and elders themselves.

A fruitless examination of this proceeding calls for a further attempt to discover what the information was that Iscariot gave to the high priest and elders, which brought about his arrest. It is not stated. There is not a word about it in the Gospels. This extraordinary omission is not often noticed by the New Testament scholars. I do not know one who has pushed the inquiry to an enlightening decision. Perhaps the guess of Klausner was right, i.e., that Iscariot sold his master because he thought that he was a false messiah. Yet, such a charge does not seem sufficient for the violent action that took place in the garden, when Iscariot kissed Jesus. Still, his judges pronounced no sentence upon him, although they decided he was ''guilty of death.'' A peculiar verdict, for they abstained from carrying out the sentence and handed him over to the Roman authorities.

The plight of Jesus in the garden, when the wretched disciples could not keep watch, was symbolic of the futility of the mission. For the first

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 256-7.

[3] *Loc. cit.*, IV, 4701.

time he became the center of a scene of violence. Hungry, worn, without sleep, deserted by his disciples, he was taken by the emissaries of the State to face the religious tribunal of the Temple. The callous, pitiless statements in the Gospels of the trials give credence to the historical validity of the events. It was one man against the world of mammon. If there were Galilean women in Jerusalem at that time, we learn of none being near him. Later Peter was to deny that he knew him. Utterly rejected by those who had known and followed him, he was led from the garden by armed men, to endure the spiritual torture of malicious foes who sought a victim to fulfill an ancient rite.

We might pause here to refer to some questions raised by earnest Bible students in the days of the Brotherhood Movement. These concerned the consequences of the abrupt termination to performing miracles. The last ones recorded took place before he entered the Temple. One was connected with the fig tree; the other was restoring the sight of a blind man. It was asked why he should hunger when he had the power to feed five thousand. Another question (and this disturbed many) was why he did not use his miraculous powers to escape from the high priest and elders. It was useless to say that his miraculous powers were for the benefit of others, not to be used for any purpose of his own.

But the most troublesome one was about the power to perform miracles he had bestowed upon his disciples. When they went on their mission in the early days, they performed miracles, but now when a miracle was wanted, they were powerless to perform one, even for the sake of the Master or to save themselves. It is no easy matter to deal with these problems; and to ignore them, as many have done, only increases the curiosity of students who are quite honest in asking for more information.

I think there is only one interpretation. Jesus had known from the first that he could not teach the people—the poor and needy, the meek and humble—that they could not serve two masters, without being found guilty of the charge of sedition. Again I must remind my readers of the record of uprisings in Judea and Galilee against tribute and tax. These were known to Jesus, and we have found in Matthew, as I have mentioned before, his opinion of tax and tribute.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PHILOSOPHY OF JESUS

Pilate was a Roman provincial governor, not a Christian philanthropist. He was given a task in Judea that bristled with complicated questions. Some were of extreme delicacy and required the tact of a skilled diplomatist. Others were religious and political. A third, also, should be noticed, which was, in a way, sociological.

The gap between rich and poor was widening. Those who had curried favor with the Romans had fared well. For three generations the folk of Galilee and Judea had felt the pinch of meager subsistence. As it had been under the kings, so it was under foreign rule. One of the objects of the mission of Jesus was to teach the people that such things need not be. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." This stamps him at once as a very different Jew. He was no messiah; he had not been anointed, and it should be remembered that Saul was anointed when he went in search of his father's asses, and David and his son Solomon were anointed long before they reached the throne.

We ask whether devout Jews would be looking for a messiah who would bring about a happier world for the people. Once one takes into consideration the record of economic conditions as described in the books of the prophets, it is easy to imagine the type of messiah the people were looking for. Surely they would not be concerned with the political qualifications of the expected one. They would be more concerned with his religious understanding of the Law, and the promise to settle in a land where they would "eat bread without scarceness." This may be putting it upon a very mundane basis, but somehow needy people want food.

Even if Jesus had claimed to be a messiah, who would have anointed him? He was a Galilean, and no high priest nor king of Israel had come from the "circle of the Gentiles." To regard these conditions as of little or no importance is to overlook the frightful state of Jerusalem when Jesus reached there. It was the week of the Passover, and we are reminded that people from all parts came there to celebrate. The influx of crowds would place a heavy strain upon the supplies of food, and the well-to-do would be in striking contrast to the impoverished citizens. On such an occasion the authorities, political and religious, would be presented with many difficulties in maintaining law and order. No doubt, Roman guards would be posted about the city. The sight of them would not be welcome, for the people would remember what happened when the standards of Rome with the eagles on the banners were flouted at the Temple.

These factors, which bear upon the duties thrust upon Pilate during this week, are of particular moment. He would be an unusual procurator if he did not take into consideration the probabilities of a riot breaking out for one reason or another. We are reminded in the Gospels of the campaign of Barabbas. The precautions that would be taken by Pilate to keep peace in the city might be double edged. The very rules designed to maintain order might turn out to be the very cause of protest. It was a thankless task for the governor, and the marvel of it is that, as it is told in the Gospels, the week passed without grave disturbance.

The reputation of Pilate and the tenure of his rule in Judea are all black. There is not a single virtue to his credit. Both Christian and Jewish commentators are agreed upon his brutal character. No one has a good word to say for him. However, knowledge of his discreditable record has caused many of the critics to overlook some important points that arose when Jesus was brought before him. On both occasions Pilate hesitated before employing the legal procedure expected by the foes of the defendant. But was Jesus the defendant in the case? What was there to defend? The loneliest man who ever walked this earth; and the philosophy that he taught was one so pure and simple that we are led to wonder if his accusers should not have taken his place in the dock.

For more than fifty years I have searched for a clear statement giving reasons for the way in which Pilate strove to conduct the trial of Jesus. Some of the authors (both Christian and Jewish) present a picture of Pilate as if he were a man of little or no experience in dealing with cases under Roman jurisdiction, even the jurisdiction in the provinces. Some of the critics credit him with scarcely the intelligence of a newly appointed county court magistrate. Yet, many of the authors devote chapters to the working of Roman law in the empire, and many of these are learned treatises upon the subject. But they all stop short of telling us what Pilate knew and what information would have been supplied to him by the spies that were set to work by the Herodians and Pharisees.

Is it conceivable that Rome would have appointed a man for this task—perhaps one of the most difficult in conquered provinces—without giving him a full record of what had taken place there from the time Pompey entered Palestine? According to the history of Rome, government officials who selected men for such positions as Pilate was given were not only conversant with nearly all details of the province, but had the record, the docket, and the dossier (or what has been called the "bluebook," which was the manual of instruction to guide the governor).

What would this contain? We may be sure that it would cover the constant rebellions that took place after the Roman invasion. Furthermore, it would give precise reasons for these uprisings and show the temper of the people regarding the payment of tribute and tax. Care would be taken to acquaint the governor with all particulars about the people who would be under his rule, so that he might be fully prepared for another outbreak.

That Pilate was left in ignorance of what had taken place under Herod and his son, Antipas, is most unlikely. The fact that he was familiar with the history of Galilee and Judea goes far to explain his conduct of the case when Jesus was brought before him, which has bewildered so many of the critics.

If, then, a record was kept of the conditions in Palestine before Pilate was appointed governor, we may be sure that, when the Herodians and Pharisees combined to spy upon Jesus, they recorded all that occurred after the first crowds gathered to hear what he had to say. The fact that the people welcomed him and that they came in large numbers from distant places would be quite sufficient to make the authorities suspect another rebel was at work urging the people to revolt. If that were so, they were soon to learn that a very different missioner had come upon the scene. There is nothing in the three Gospels to indicate that anyone—disciple, spy, or any of the "meek and humble"—could imagine he might foment discord.

Who kept the record we shall never know, but the more we look into this matter, the more convinced we become that the Aramaic version contained no Christian interpolations. There was not a "Christian" Jew nor a "Christian" Gentile in the land at that time. Whoever it was that took down the sayings that are consonant with his philosophy must have been a highly educated, Greek-speaking Aramean, or an Aramean-speaking Greek. Such a person was sure to be an official or clerk in the administration of Antipas.

I hold the view that Pilate was fully informed of the mission of Jesus before he reached Jerusalem in Passover week, and that, as an educated Roman, he knew that the philosophy of Jesus was so far above the heads of those he spoke to that it could have no effect to be feared.

We have learned from several sources that the educated people of Rome had taken a fancy to Stoicism. For a time it was a fad of the patrician class, but we have not heard of anyone of consequence who thought it worth while to practice the cult. Is it not plausible, then, to wonder if Pilate, remorseless ruler that he was, had not read some of the treatises upon Zeno written by Roman authors? We ought not to neglect exploring every avenue where evidence is to be found of influences at work in the mind of Pilate. If he did know something about the Stoic philosophy, he would be intelligent enough (if he had read the report of what Jesus had laid down in the beatitudes, the precepts, and the rest of the Sermon) to conclude that there was scarcely any similarity in the two philosophies. Upon analysis, there are really no resemblances, for in Zeno's philosophy we look in vain for the economic understanding Jesus has given us in the Sermon on the Mount. To withdraw from the world and live a simple life was advocated long before

Zeno appeared in Athens. That they both were non-political goes without saying.

The trial presents many problems that remain unsolved. One is the language question. In this case it looms large. Many critics have agreed that Jesus spoke only Aramaic and that, also, was the tongue of the Jews. Indeed, Klausner tells us that when Scripture was read in the synagogues of Galilee it was translated from the Hebrew into Aramaic. Here an important question is raised, namely: did Pilate speak or read the language Jesus spoke? Some critics pass this off rather lightly by suggesting the presence of an interpreter at the trial.

The native tongue of Pilate was Latin, but it is possible that he knew Greek. For the extension of Greek influences went as far west before the days of Alexander the Great as they did east and beyond the Euphrates. The western shores of Italy as far north as Pisa and the southern shores of Sicily tell the story in monuments and remains of Greek settlements. Therefore, we might assume that educated Romans knew the language. But this does not enter into the case of the trial, and by excluding Greek we are left with only two tongues to consider: Latin and Aramaic. Hebrew had long ceased to be a language of the common folk.

Therefore, we may decide that Pilate questioned Jesus in Latin and his interpreter put it into Aramaic. Then, the reply of Jesus was translated into Latin. We may be sure these interchanges were accurate, for there is no reference in the Gospels to an objection being raised concerning their clarity.

There were no "Christians" at the trial, nor do the Gospels mention the presence of a disciple. The accepted versions of what took place in the hearings before Pilate do not describe any mystical, supernatural flights of the imagination, for such would have been of no interest to Pilate, and we know that the Roman authorities interfered as little as possible with the religious practices and ideas of the Jews. No witnesses were called to be examined. Those that accused him were in the ruck of spectators, and from the description they could not be called an orderly group.

The question of the whereabouts of Iscariot has been raised, but there is no evidence that he was present at the trials. Still, from the story told in Matthew concerning his repentance, it is likely that he was present when Jesus was condemned. Matthew says:

> Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,
>
> Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.
>
> And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself (27:3-6).

From this we gather that the charge he made to the chief priests and elders was not political. Hence, it is correct to infer that it was not the concern of Pilate but that it was religious and for the consideration of the Sanhedrin only.

It is important here that we should have a clear understanding of the background of the philosophy of Jesus regarding the question of tax and tribute. For this it is necessary to go back to the Maccabean period. Robert Pfeiffer, in his *History of New Testament Times*, gives us several references to the revolts against taxation and tribute, and summarizes the impositions levied by conquering invaders upon the Jews:

> The Jews, however, were chafing under foreign domination, despite their apparent obedience to their Ptolemaic rulers: we are told that they welcomed Antiochus III in 198, giving him all possible aid. They imagined to have gained something through the change, but this illusion was short-lived. Disastrously defeated by Lucius Cornelius Scipio at Magnesia in 190 B.C. (Dan. 11:18), Antiochus was forced to pay Rome an enormous indemnity, and died (187) while plundering a temple in Elymais. His son Seleucus IV (187-175) sent forth an exactor, Heliodorus, to raise funds due to Rome, but Seleucus IV was eventually assassinated by him; his brother Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164) succeeded him. The new king, by adding to the fiscal burdens (weighing heavily on the Jews since the battle of Magnesia), forcible Hellenization and proscription of Judaism, precipitated the Maccabean revolt.[1]

It is quite unnecessary to go to the works of Josephus, *Antiquities* and *Wars of the Jews*, for his account of some of these rebellions. He wrote at a later date. A better source is found in the first chapter of the Books of the Maccabees. There we read a full description of the plunder that was taken from the Temple. It is a pity the Books of the Apocrypha are not better known to students, for they contain much information about the period between the close of Alexander's campaigns and the Roman occupation in the time of Jesus. The First Book of Maccabees has been accepted by eminent scholars as a real contribution to the history of the Jews of that period (175-134 B.C.), and many regret that it was not included in the Canon of the Authorized Version.

There must have been eight or ten revolts in Galilee and Judea before Jesus started upon his mission. Undoubtedly he would know of the Maccabean campaigns and the reasons for them. There was also the rebellion in Galilee (A.D. 6) headed by Judas the Gaulonite, who laid waste the city of Sepphoris, built by Herod Antipas. This occurred only a few years after Jesus was born.

The history of these revolutions and the reasons for them make it perfectly plain that Jesus had decided that violence bred violence and that nothing worth having was gained by resorting to it. Therefore, his philosophy stemmed from a totally different line of conduct, although it was inspired by the thought proclaimed before his days in Galilee, and expressed in "the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy" of Judas of Galilee: "an unquenchable love of liberty—holding God alone to be ruler and lord—and by indifference to death."[2]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, London, A. & C. Black, 1949, p. 9.

Whatever may have been the religious and political troubles of the Jews after the settlement of the twelve tribes in Palestine, we cannot overlook the economic factors that were at work, if we wish to understand the philosophy and mission of Jesus. Lord Acton has said that we have to dig deep to find the causes of many historic events, and because he used his knowledge of fundamental economics in his work of research, he was able to give us new lights upon old evils. Later on, I shall treat more thoroughly the elements which form the nucleus of the philosophy of Jesus—a philosophy never expressed before he came, and one which has not been as clearly expressed since he passed away.

Before I attempt to do this, however, I wish to bring to the reader's notice the work of one who made no mistake whatever about the true meaning of the reply that Jesus gave upon the payment of tribute. In *Emperor and Galilean*, Henrik Ibsen deals with the situation in no unmeasured terms. I should advise my readers to obtain a copy of Ibsen's drama and read carefully one of the most powerful religious plays written in our era. It is amazing to think that a Norwegian playwright should have a conception of Jesus which no theologian or Gospel writer ever succeeded in comprehending. How strange that Ibsen should give to Jesus a majesty and glory that are denied him by so many who have written long books upon his life!

In Act III, scene iv, the Emperor Julian the Apostate is with his soothsayer, Maximus the Mystic, in the ruins of the Temple of Apollo at Antioch. Julian came to the throne a few years after the death of Constantine the Great. He was educated by Eusebius. Here is part of this remarkable scene, that touches closely the subject we have under review:

> *Julian*. . . . . Emperor and Galilean! How reconcile that contradiction?
>
> Yes, this Jesus Christ is the greatest rebel that ever lived. What was Brutus—what was Cassius, compared with him? They murdered only the man Julius Caesar; but he murders all that is called Caesar or Augustus. Is peace conceivable between the Galilean and the Emperor? Is there room for the two of them together upon the earth? For he lives on the earth, Maximus,—the Galilean lives, I say, however thoroughly both Jews and Romans imagined that they had killed him; he lives in the rebellious minds of men; he lives in their scorn and defiance of all visible authority.
>
> "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's,—and to God the things that are God's!" Never has mouth of man uttered a craftier

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[2] See *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, "Judas of Galilee," II, 2629.

> saying than that. What lies behind it? What, and how much, belongs to the Emperor? That saying is nothing but a bludgeon wherewith to strike the crown from off the Emperor's head.

It may be advanced that Ibsen was something far more than a writer for the stage. When I read this speech for the first time many years ago, I was struck with the realization that he had for the basis of it a wide knowledge of the sayings of the Early Fathers. There is something in it which strongly reminds me of Clement of Alexandria, Gregory the Great, St. Augustine, and several others who held similar ideas about the payment of tribute and tax under duress. To the modern reader this may seem very strong criticism, but Hildebrand, Pope Gregory VII, denounced the rulers in even stronger terms in a letter he wrote to the Bishop of Metz in 1081.

"What, and how much, belongs to the Emperor?" The Justinian law is as follows: "He is just who gives to each what belongs to him."

What is Caesar's? There can be only one reply to this, and that is the wealth that, by right, belongs to him. In its simplest form it is "that which he produces by his own effort." An extension of this may go as far as exchange in barter for the produce of another. The critics have interpreted the answer of Jesus in a political sense. They say that he consented to the payment of tribute to Caesar. Such an idea conflicts with all the principles that Jesus laid down in his philosophy. How could he advise anyone to seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and then consent to the maintenance of empire and its ruler? This would be incompatible with his statement that this kingdom was not of this world, and that *you cannot serve two masters*.

The critics cannot have it both ways. They do not attempt to explain why he was put to death, if he caused no offense to the Roman authorities. Let us accept the verdict of contemporaries passed upon Pilate as a ruthless official, a remorseless tyrant. But against this it may be said that he was no fool. His hesitancy in the first trial indicates clearly that he did not want to take the responsibility of carrying out the demands of the high priest and the elders.

We might ask, how much did Pilate know? What was reported to him by the spies of the Herodians and the Pharisees? Some day a document may turn up that will throw an entirely new light upon this crime. One reason for Pilate's reluctance to try Jesus on the nebulous charge made by the religious authorities of the Temple may be philosophical. In matters of this kind, we are apt to forget that a man like Pilate may be a totally different person from that of a political governor. We have known many cases of double personality in such men. This other Pilate—an educated Roman, let us not forget—would, in all probability, at some time in his apprenticeship for such a career have done what other Roman youths did, and that was to study the philosophies that had been expounded in Athens and Rome.

Hence, it might be suggested that he was the only one there who understood the transcendental philosophy of Jesus.

Had Pilate drawn upon his knowledge of Plato's dialogues for a decision satisfactory to his own mind of what was meant by the reply? The inference would be that he knew what was Caesar's and what was God's.

This may be carrying the analysis of the difficulties of understanding the trial to excess, but let us make no mistake about it, the case is not closed, and it will remain open for thoughtful minds so long as the Gospels are read.

CHAPTER XIX

THE TRIAL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE

Matthew and Mark report only one hearing before Pilate. The one before Antipas is not mentioned in these two Gospels. Here are two difficulties most of the critics have touched upon only in a vague way. A confusion of notions certainly arises when the account given in Luke is grafted on to that given in the first two Gospels. Perhaps it would be better to reconsider the Lucan story of what happened.

The writer of it has been described as a rather fanciful colorist, who "loves a bit of romance." He seems to have something of his own to add to the stories found in Mark and Matthew, but in this one there seems to be acceptable evidence that Jesus appeared twice before Pilate and was sent once to Antipas. The tetrarch of Galilee was in Jerusalem for the celebration of the Passover, and lodged in Jerusalem close to Pilate's quarters. The scenes pictured in the Third Gospel read as follows:

> And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.
>
> And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.
>
> And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.
>
> Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.
>
> And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.
>
> When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean.
>
> And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.
>
> And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.
>
> Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.
>
> And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.
>
> And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate (23:1-11).

In this report we find a definite charge that really amounts to sedition. He was accused by someone not named of "perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar." The only person or persons who could make this charge were the Pharisees and Herodians, who laid the plot to trap him. This account alters considerably the description in Mark and Matthew of the mystification of the people who heard his reply "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

The Lucan account helps to clear up the mass of confusions found in the works of the most important Gospel critics concerning the payment of tribute. Here we have a direct statement of the true meaning of his reply. But those critics who ignore this scene leave us to wonder why he was crucified.

There is another charge in this account, which has a religious and a political bearing that was not fully reported to the chief priests and elders. It is this: [He says] "that he himself is Christ a King" (23:2). We have already tried to show that he never made such a claim. Surely it is obvious that this is a Christian insertion, for the term "Christ," as it is used there was not added to his name until long after his death. The accusers would not have used it, for it would not have been given in Greek. The words, if the sentence had been spoken, would have been "messiah."

It is no easy work to unravel the tangled scheme of the trials as they are related in the three Gospels. According to Luke, the first question Pilate puts to Jesus is: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" And Jesus answered, "Thou sayest it."

What was meant by this answer has been interpreted in several different ways by the critics. Some have even taken it as an admission on the part of Jesus that he was King of the Jews, although there is not the slightest evidence anywhere that he made such a claim. To put it in the language of today, it might be interpreted thus: "*You* say so." The use of the pronoun "Thou," is misleading, and perhaps Jesus put it in the third person plural: "*They* say so," referring to the exclamations of the crowd who welcomed him on his way to Bethany. From what other source could his accusers at this first hearing before Pilate, have heard this expression? The pent-up claims of followers for their hero may be attributed to excitement, and in Bible stories there seems to be no limit to this ebullience.

On hearing the reply, "Thou sayest it," Pilate turned to the chief priests and to the people and said, "I find no fault in this man."

Pilate must have taken this reply as a denial, not as an affirmation, for he took no action against Jesus as a pretender to the throne of David. The attitude of Pilate at the first hearing is not easily explained. Indeed, there is no satisfactory solution of the reason why he did not accept the testimony of those who held him guilty of some religious or political offense. Years ago some of the critics used the passage in Matthew about the dream of Pilate's wife as a reason for Pilate's reluctance to judge him. The reference is missing in Mark and in Luke, and why it should be in Matthew we do not know, for the wife would be the last person to intervene in the proceedings. Matthew sets it out as follows:

> When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him (27:19).

It is possible that Pilate did not like the attitude of the crowd and that he feared a disturbance. What had become of the followers of Jesus who made their presence felt at the hearing of the Sanhedrin? We search the three Gospels for a word about their disappearance, but they have vanished from the scenes.

However, there is nothing strange in this, for when Jesus was sent to Pilate, the people who welcomed him as a prophet from Nazareth would quickly realize it was no longer a matter for the chief priests and elders, but that there were political reasons for sending him to the Roman governor. The stories in Luke about women coming down from Galilee may be set aside. There was no time for the news of Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane to reach Galilee and for his friends to journey to Jerusalem. Some might have been there for the feast, but the critics have told us that the people of Galilee were not reputed to be strict observers of feast-days.

The studious Bible reader may ask why, in trying to render an acceptable story of the last week in Jerusalem, we use sources that have been questioned by some of the most lenient critics. Luke's account has suffered in this respect, but there is no reason why we should not take from it what is plausible and consistent with the actions that are narrated by Mark and Matthew. Once the mind is clear concerning the character and mission of Jesus, it is not difficult to select from all the Gospels (and in some cases, from the Epistles) passages that are related to his works and sayings.

When Pilate dismissed the court, having found no case against the accused, he thrust the burden of a judgment upon Antipas, after he learned that Jesus was a Galilean. Mark and Matthew do not deal with the Antipas episode. These strange omissions and gaps, so noticeable in the Books of the Old Testament, have caused students of the Gospels to ponder why they occur and why there should be so many different versions of actions that bear the imprint of reality. There has been no satisfactory answer to these problems. The conjectures have been many, but no solution of them has been found.

It is hard to believe the writers of the Gospels were working upon a first-hand translation from the Aramaic. It is more likely that transcripts were made from it. Nevertheless, patient scrutiny brings its own reward for, in selecting the passages that fit consistently into the philosophy of Jesus, an acceptable portrait may be presented of the prophet of Nazareth.

The passage in Luke about Pilate learning that Jesus was a Galilean reads as if the knowledge had just come to him (23:6-7). But on reflection, it does not seem possible that he was unaware of the proceedings that had taken place before the high priest and elders. They knew that he had been announced as the prophet of Nazareth, and Pilate could scarcely be ignorant of the demonstration stirred up by the supporters of Jesus. This notion goes further, for it excludes the idea of reports of the Pharisees and Herodians concerning Jesus having reached the procurator of Judea. Perhaps the best way to explain this, for the sake of clarity, is to assume that Pilate laid hold of the notion as the way out of a dilemma that disturbed him greatly, and that it would be a relief to be rid of the onus of having to find Jesus guilty of a philosophical offense against Rome.

When he appeared before Antipas, the chief priests and scribes were present. We learn that Antipas was glad to see Jesus for he had heard about his wonderworks. This goes some way to substantiate the idea that the Herodians and Pharisees had induced Antipas to set a spy at work and report on the nature of the mission. Many questions were put to Jesus without drawing an answer from him, and after mocking him and dressing him in a gorgeous robe, Herod sent him back to Pilate. Was this done because Antipas found no definite offense such as would be dealt with by the tetrarch of Galilee? Whatever the reason was for the reluctance on the part of Pilate and Antipas to deal with Jesus as the high priest and elders demanded, it is plain that neither was inclined to take the responsibility of punishing him by imprisonment or death.

It may be advanced as a suggestion that probably the Aramaic report of the Herodian spy contained nothing in conduct or speech which transgressed the law. No doubt the position of Antipas in Galilee was difficult enough without causing a disturbance in the province by taking severe measures against a prophet. Herod would be mindful of the past and would wish to avoid another uprising such as the one he had dealt with shortly after Jesus was born. Both Pilate and Antipas disliked the task that the high priests and elders had thrust upon them.

The student who desires to find an acceptable solution to the complicated problems concerning the responsibility of those who have been held guilty of the death of Jesus must on no consideration overlook the leading part played by the Herodians. It is true we learned early in the career of Jesus that they connived with the Pharisees to spy upon him.

Herod and his sons were not Jews. They came from an Idumean family, the old land of Edom southeast of the Dead Sea. The historians tell us that they were formerly a Bedouin people. Later the Israelites thought it diplomatic to claim kinship with them. The first Herod (Antipater the younger) was not selected by Jews to govern Judea. He was nominated by Mark Antony in Rome and appointed by Caesar (48 B.C.), made a Roman citizen, and given immunity from taxes. So the Jews had reason to hate him and his ancestors as foreigners and tax collectors.

It is a sad story that is related by Josephus and others of sheer opportunism on the part of the leading Jews of his time to curry favor with him. Even the high priest Hyrcanus "was able to exercise an influence favorable to the new dynasty."[1]

It is necessary to consider the political conditions in Judea when Pilate was procurator in Jerusalem. Many of the critics are inclined to throw the weight of responsibility for what happened after the first scenes in the Temple upon the high priest and elders. But upon looking closely into the stories as they are told in the three Gospels, they surrendered their claim to prosecute and transferred the case to Pilate. After the first hearing before the governor, the high priest, the elders and other Jews scarcely appear upon the scenes.

Was the case then left entirely in the hands of the Herodians? In Luke's version we learn that the chief priests and scribes accused and denounced him when he appeared before Herod (23:10). This does not seem reasonable, for as they could not find anything but a vague offense such as blasphemy when they first arraigned him, how could they hope to present a better case to be heard before the tetrarch of Galilee? No new evidence was produced; no new charge was made. Pilate turned him over to Herod when he heard that Jesus was a Galilean (23:6-7), and it is very doubtful that the charge of blasphemy at the first trial would carry any weight before an Idumean magistrate. It is a hard task to try to make sense of the story that is told in Luke.

There is no romance about the way the scenes of this day are related in the Gospels. The facts recorded may be accepted as real: reluctant judges, a silent, undefended prisoner, and a disorderly crowd of accusers. Only an iron will could contend against the enmity of the crowd. The figure of Jesus, as we can picture it to ourselves, is one of spiritual majesty, a grandeur of the soul never given by poet to anyone before his time or after it. Perhaps the shining submissiveness of his manner affected Pilate and Herod, for they were impotent to reach a decision.

Pilate marveled at his silence and declared to the end that Jesus was innocent. The crowd, however, demanded the release of Barabbas and that Jesus should be crucified. And so violent were their demands that Pilate feared a tumult if he did not satisfy them.

Some of the Bible scholars have been in a quandary as to which of the Gospels should be taken as a reasonable account of the second hearing before Pilate. They differ in many respects, but all agree as to the pronouncements of the governor. We learn from each Gospel that Pilate said "I have found no fault in this man." No question was put to Jesus at the last hearing.

Who has attempted to explain why Pilate, finding no guilt in the accused, was powerless to save him from the crowd? Was the representative of Rome cowed by the clamors that it made? Why was the law of Rome cast adrift and nothing done to protect Jesus and disperse the crowd? The only plea that can be put forward for Pilate is that he feared an outbreak of violence. Such a one, however, in no way helps us to understand how the authority broke down and why Pilate should grant the demands of the people to release Barabbas and crucify Jesus. It is hard to give a reason why this was done and why the innocent one should be scourged.

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[1] *See* "Herod," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed., XI, 511.

It is somewhat bewildering to make sense of the proceeding, for we learn in each Gospel that Roman soldiers were given the duty of taking the innocent man to the place of execution. And we must infer that it was carried out by them. Direct nailing upon a cross was not a Jewish custom of death punishment. Notwithstanding the references in Deuteronomy and Joshua (8:29 and 10:26), the authorities on pagan customs agree that the cross was Roman and the executioners Roman too. When we consider the preparations that had been made for the execution of Barabbas, we may feel fairly certain that the cross that was meant for him was the one upon which Jesus was nailed.

CHAPTER XX

PONTIUS PILATE—AN EVALUATION

There were no Christians in Palestine when Pilate became procurator of Judea. He ruled there from the year A.D. 26 to 36, and then he was recalled to Rome. What became of him afterwards is a matter of sheer conjecture. The significance of his presence in Jerusalem concerns the fate of Jesus.

Pilate cannot be understood unless the conditions that prevailed at that time in the divided land of Palestine are fixed firmly in the mind. There is no difficulty about this, for there are many sources of information that have been tested, which give us a vivid account of the turmoil that existed there.

After the death of Herod the Great, Philip had been appointed tetrarch of the northeastern section which was inhabited mainly by Gentiles. He built himself a new capital at Caesarea Philippi. Herod Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, mainly peopled by Jews. He fortified Sepphoris. Judea was assigned to Archelaus, together with Samaria and Idumea. There were military garrisons all over the country. Imperial taxes were collected by the procurator through the native authorities, while the local taxes were farmed out to contractors, who were usually Jews.

> . . . The Jews had to take an oath of allegiance to the emperor; . . . and Jewish worship stood under the protection of the Roman state; but this did not exclude a certain amount of supervision of temple matters by the Roman officials.[1]

The same deep-seated frictions that had been prevalent in the area for centuries before the onslaught of the Assyrians upon the northern kingdom were now disrupting Palestine north and south. Indeed, it may be said there was scarcely any point in religious and political affairs upon which the three great provinces could establish a harmony of national purpose. There was no point of contact between Samaria and Judea, and as for the conditions which existed between Samaria and Galilee, little hope could be gleaned of reconciliation upon any basis.

Klausner tells us:

> . . . Scarcely a year went by during this century without wars or other disturbances: wars, rebellions, outbreaks and riots, and all of them with their concomitant of incessant bloodshed; and this state of things prevailed in the Land of Israel throughout the whole epoch which preceded Jesus and prevailed also during his lifetime. . . .[2]

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[1] "Israel," *Ency. Bibl.*, II, 2275.

[2] *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 167.

These disastrous occurrences have been treated only briefly by many authorities, perhaps because of the pattern of worldliness they display. But is it possible to understand the aim and purpose of Jesus unless we have firmly fixed in our minds the state of Palestine when he set forth after the baptism to give the good tidings to men? It seems to me impossible for the student to grasp clearly the utter hopelessness of religious and political strife that existed unless he compares closely the works of Jewish writers with those of Christian scholars who have dealt with this period.

Some years ago a book came from the rabbi and lawyer, Hyman E. Goldin, entitled *The Case of the Nazarene Reopened.*[3] This work is a forensic and polemical analysis of the period we have under review. It is a weighty tome of 863 pages, and it is not easy reading for the student who has not been drilled in jurisprudence. Still, it is a valuable contribution to the knowledge that we desire to have. Indeed, it is recommended that the books of Christian scholars who have written upon this period should be compared with those of Jewish writers of repute.

Imagine, then, the religious and political turmoil to which the whole of Palestine had been reduced by its internecine troubles when Pilate was made procurator of Judea. Elsewhere I have attempted to give an impression about the youth of this man—the education he would have received in Rome, which would tend to mold his thought.

Was it really any different there than it was in Judea? It is hard to say. But we may be sure of one thing: the educated people of the world empire of that time were looking for a cataclysmic change. I count between eight and ten quite different ritual practices that attracted the minds of educated Romans. Undoubtedly Stoicism was the pressing concern of cultured minds. The world of men seemed weary of strife and slavery. The theories of the cultists and the politicians had not brought about the security that banishes fear. Perhaps the daily question whenever two Romans met would be, "What will happen next?" Caesar's triumphs in Gaul and Britain did not serve to fill the bellies of the hungry in Rome. When he lay at the base of Pompey's statue, after the assassination, rebellion seethed as never before, and the old empires were torn anew in a strife that shook the foundations of what was called the civilized world, and made their peoples the prey of the barbarian hordes that were to descend from the north.

Great armies come and go, and for a time their invincible commanders are glorified by the people who have to pay in blood and gold. But when we reckon their periods in age-time, we cannot help but wonder at the hopelessness of a people ever learning the futility of military conquest and territorial gain.

To what extent was the mind of Pilate schooled in the different philosophies that were taught in Rome when he was a youth? We search in vain for information upon this matter. Yet we are not wrong when we take the simple accounts in the Gospels of the trial of Jesus as evidence that he knew clearly the difference between the practice of the State and the philosophy of Zeno and Cicero. Neither Christian scholars nor Jewish analysts have given him credit for this.

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[3] New York, Exposition Press, 1948.

Suppose that we accept all that Josephus and Philo have written about this man, and place him in the category of ruthless, malicious rulers. Even after this is done, there is still much to be known about him. There are passages in the Acts that make us think twice about his character. One tells us that he wished to let Jesus go. If we take the record as it is presented in the Gospels, we cannot ignore this statement.

However, there are bewildering cross currents of antipathy. Who was responsible for the condemnation and the crucifixion of Jesus? Many of the Jewish authorities place it squarely upon the shoulders of Rome. Others of different denominations, down to this day, place the responsibility upon the high priest, as the representative of the Jews.

Was there ever a case of such complexity recorded before the time of Pilate or afterwards? Is it or is it not history? How can such a question be raised? Brief as the references are in the Gospels to the trial, they are, in their simple form, a record of an event that took place at a certain time and at a place now known to all the world. The very simplicity of the accounts in Matthew and Mark of what occurred in Jerusalem during the last week of the life of Jesus, should be sufficient to impress the student with the idea that they were recorded by men who were on the spot. But who they were we shall never know.

If we had a clue that would lead us to the reporter of these last days, we should be able to form an idea concerning the reason for the attitude of Pilate when Jesus was led before him. Much of the work of the Bible critics is conjecture. If it is all guess work, then I must confess that I find many attractive channels of thought to be explored in this strange story.

After the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, ten of the disciples fled. We know that Peter followed his master to the house of the high priest and there denied him three times. We hear no more of him after that incident. The twelfth—Iscariot—repented and returned the bribe. The report states that he hanged himself. Who were the persons present at some of these scenes mentioned in the Gospels?

We are told that Simon of Cyrene was forced into carrying the cross, but we do not know that he was present at any of the hearings before the high priest or Pilate. However, there are several various romances about Simon in later years. In the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* he is described as a Hellenistic Jew who became an important member of the early Church.

Another man whose character has attracted scores of romance writers to present it in many versions is Joseph of Arimathea. That he should have appealed to the Roman procurator for leave to bury the body of Jesus was undoubtedly a courageous act, particularly as it was contrary to Roman rules. Here again we have a temporizing Pilate, and we daresay that pressure was brought to bear upon him in this matter by the high priests and elders. It is unnecessary here to go into the extraordinary stories (apart from that of the burial of Jesus) that have been woven about Joseph, which can be read in encyclopaedias and works especially devoted to him. There are different accounts about his vocation and the position he held in the religious and political administrations of Jerusalem. Some say he might have been a member of the Sanhedrin. Another story is that possibly he was a merchant, and a rich man. There are only one or two other characters in the Gospel stories who have drawn writers to weave legends as beautiful as those associated with Joseph of Arimathea. In the west of England there are legends about this man, which are firmly believed. One is that he built, in the year A.D. 63, a wattle church at Glastonbury. He was described as a tin merchant, and it was the tin mines of Cornwall that attracted him to visit Britain.

Perhaps these two men, Simon and Joseph, were fully informed of everything that had taken place since Jesus was hailed as the prophet of Nazareth by the villagers of Bethany. Yet, no one has suggested either has left a record of what took place.

To push our conjectures further: one of the soldiers present at the crucifixion might have been a Hellenized Jew drafted into the army, perhaps ten or fifteen years before Pilate was made procurator. Here and there in the Gospels there are references to soldiers who were sympathetic to the gnostic ideas that they found in Jewish thought. It is possible the Roman soldiers who had to carry out the crucifixion were not without sympathy for the victim, for many of them were devotees of Mithras.

These three characters are the sole persons present during that last week who could have reported part or the whole of the proceedings. After such finds as the Dead Sea Scrolls, we should not be surprised if some day it is announced that a record of the trials of Jesus has been found in a jar hidden in some cave.

The reader may say, "Your conjectures have not led to a solution of the mystery." Perhaps our first idea of a spy is worth following up, for the plot of the Herodians and the Pharisees was quite in accordance with the disturbed political conditions of Palestine. Agitators and reformers had to be watched, and their meetings reported to headquarters.

There are several other ways of furthering this inquiry. In my mind perhaps it assumes an importance beyond the purview of those who have given us the result of their researches. Let us ask the question: "Did the Roman authorities, as represented by Pilate at Jerusalem, receive a record from the Herodians and Pharisees who plotted to trap Jesus? And in what language was this report written?"

There should be no difficulty in deciding this matter, for nearly all the great Bible scholars formerly agreed that the basis of the Gospel stories was found in the Aramaic tongue. This is what is called Quelle, source, as I have pointed out elsewhere. We know of no other tongue that Jesus could speak. He talked to the people of the villages and their language was Aramaic. Of this we may be sure because the great Jewish scholars like Klausner, insist upon impressing us with the fact that when Torah was read in the synagogue in Hebrew the sayings had to be translated into the tongue of the people, which was Aramaic. Who, then, was employed by the Herodians and Pharisees to record the sayings of Jesus as he moved from place to place, and group to group, to expound his philosophy? We may reject at once the idea that any disciple was capable of performing this task, for we are told definitely in Acts that "they were unlearned and ignorant men" (4:13).

Therefore, through a process of reasoning that is not as ancient as the days of Pilate, we may concede that whoever took the sayings down was not only a fluent speaker of Aramaic but thoroughly well versed in Greek. This does not mean that the Greek was what is called the *koinē*, a modified dialect in which Greek predominates. With all due respect to the learning of my friend, Professor Sidney Smith, I think it necessary to point out that this dialect of the Greek was scarcely known in the villages of Galilee. I hold the notion that it was a free speech of those who were engaged in trading with the various merchants of different nationalities in the cities north of the districts where Jesus spoke.

Hence, this brings us back to the course adopted by the Herodians and the Pharisees to trap him. The methods would be no different then than they have been during the two recent World Wars. These maneuvers of government are as old as politicians, and we may be sure that when the Herodians and the Pharisees made up their minds to do away with Jesus, they decided that a seditious speech would be quite sufficient to condemn him and sentence him to death.

Now did Pilate receive the report of this spy? Why was he firmly convinced, at first, that Jesus had done no wrong? Here we meet the problem shirked by all the great scholars. So far as I can understand the quandary raised by it, it is one of intricate fathoming. Pilate found no guilt in Jesus. So we learn after he was sent by the high priest and the elders to the procurator. Who has asked this pertinent question? Surely it is not to be assumed that when Jesus appeared before Pilate for the first time, the accused was unknown to him. Such a hypothesis would be absurd. What were the duties of a procurator in Jerusalem at that particular time, after the many uprisings since the days of the Maccabees? Would Pilate not have been informed by his agents of any semblance at all of another outbreak? He would be a very poor emissary of Roman ideas of imperialism if he neglected to pursue such a course.

Was he not then deeply perplexed about the uprising that is attributed to Barabbas? Surely this was sufficient to make him suspicious of any agitator or reformer that might appear in Judea. Remember, Barabbas was awaiting crucifixion at that time, and the cross was made.

For what it is worth, I am convinced that Pilate was familiar with the whole philosophy of Jesus; that he was an educated Roman—in theory a Stoic, in all probability—and knew that the anti-State philosophers were as harmless as the doves that were sold in the Temple. We cannot have it both ways—an ignorant Pilate and a guiltless Jesus—in any of these controversies, which present problems of what really took place during that last week in Jerusalem. It is not to be thought for a moment that Pilate spoke the Aramaic tongue. But there is no good reason for thinking that Greek speech was a stranger to him. Greek had been spoken in the streets of Rome for centuries before he was born. Merchants from Mycenae, Crete, and Phoenicia were as familiar there as shipowners from the Piraeus.

But this notion of the Aramaic version, taken by the spies and rendered into Greek, does not in any way conflict with the probability of the departmental report being translated again from Greek to Latin. We should remember that Pilate had been procurator of Jerusalem two or three years before Jesus was brought face to face with him. This is not probing too far in the inquiry, for we are not told in the Gospel stories what language Pilate used when he put his first question to Jesus.

Here, let it be emphasized that there should be no doubt about the reality of these scenes. The hallmarks of history are impressed upon them. The very brevity of the accounts goes far to assure us that they took place. Of course it may be urged that witnesses differ in their testimonies. This may seem a niggling matter, but with Pilate it would mean much, for he would know the difference between a political agitator and a philosopher. The tones of the addresses that Jesus gave to the people of the country districts of Galilee would mean much also to the reporter who took them down.

Of course, there are many avenues of investigation to this matter that have not been explored, and I can only select a few of those I have considered for the past fifty years. I still hold that the first translation of the Aramaic was into Greek, and that the report transmitted to Pilate would be that of another department and couched in the legal language of the government of Rome. It is not difficult to understand why the first translation of the Aramaic was in Greek. The scholars are nearly all agreed that the Gospel of Mark was the first to appear, somewhere between A.D. 65 and 70. However, this notion of the date of its production is scarcely in accordance with the idea that Peter dictated it to Mark in Rome. It is understandable that the

Greek version was the only one that could be taken to the people in Rome and in the cities of Asia Minor and Greece, where the tongue was that of the common people in the routine of the day. In the report for Pilate, one object would be predominant, and that would be to inform the procurator of what had occurred, in the language with which he was familiar.

Each question he put to Jesus clearly indicates the sole charge made by his accusers, namely "Art thou the King of the Jews?" The putting of this question goes far to reveal the mind of Pilate because, to him, nothing could have been more absurd than this simple, lonely man aspiring to be a messiah.

Whether a solution of this matter will ever be found to the satisfaction of Gospel scholars is problematical. It is one of the strangest questions history leaves unanswered. The only conclusion I can come to is that Pilate saw "no fault" in that man.

After Pilate's definite pronouncement that he found no fault in Jesus, reason gave place to chaos. The aforetime rigor of the law and rule of Rome, at home and abroad, met with disaster. An innocent man was delivered to the mob; and Barabbas, the victim for a celebration of long ancient custom, was reprieved and set at liberty. The man who served only one master was to be the victim. Pilate's mind had given way to the demands of the crowd, and though Jesus was cleared of any offense of a religious or a political kind, he was scourged by the order of Pilate whose soldiers followed him to Golgotha. The cross was ready, for it had been made for Barabbas, and though one version tells us that Simon the Cyrenian carried it part of the journey, it was the men of Pilate's army who nailed the victim to it, and erected it to the satisfaction of those who triumphed over the will of the governor.

Then enmity conquered justice, and there was given to Christendom a symbol that has stirred its soul ever since. The agony of Gethsemane, the torture of the trials endured by a lone man came to an end. "*It is finished*."

Do these words mean more than that Jesus had died and the mission had ended? We should probe deeply into our consciousness to find a reply to this. Was mortal death the end of the man and his mission? That could not be, for in it he conquered time and space. Years became moments in duration, and space lost its boundaries forever.

Who was there to understand what the crucifixion meant? It may be surmised that Pilate was the only one in Jerusalem that week, who divined the naked truth as it was exposed upon the cross. As an educated Roman he would know something of the philosophies that had been debated in Greece and Italy, and in this respect his judgment of the man would enable him to fathom the mystery. His words have not received due consideration. Pilate said:

> . . . Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him (Luke 23:14).

In the brief reports of the three Gospels we learn nothing of this examination. One or two questions are asked, but they scarcely cover all that the above statement implies. However, we may be sure that the charges made by the high priest and elders were seriously considered by Pilate. Still, our imagination is not capable of conveying the calamitous change that shook Pilate when he ordered Jesus to be scourged and gave him to the mob.

The fate of prophets and philosophers is written large in the annals of the old civilizations. Most of them live in vain but leave a memory that never dies, and the memory of Golgotha lingers even to this day, when it is said there was never so much evil on earth. The one who came to reveal "the secret hidden from the beginning of the world" linked God's justice with creation itself, and established that it was ageless and deathless, that for which the wisest of the Greeks searched. Maybe the time has not come when the churches of all Christian denominations will turn men's minds from mammon to God. But if they are to survive, they should realize that the time is short and that we are now passing through a period that is not unlike those which the older civilizations experienced in their decline.

What does the symbol of the Roman cross mean to us? Does it mean a riddance of self, the abandonment of all worldliness? Does it really mean that we cannot serve two masters, and all that that implies? Each man must answer this for himself. For only one at a time can be nailed to the cross. It is not made for two. Is the cross an emblem of the sanctity of sacrifice of the self? And is renunciation of all worldliness the price of redemption? Questions mount on question, as the years pass on, and still man would learn what it all means to him. It may be solely a matter of each individual working this problem out to his own satisfaction. It is not sufficient for his neighbor to tell him that it is a mystery and that faith alone will guide him aright. Nevertheless, and no matter how strong his faith may be, common man will place his faith in reason.

The Jesus of flesh and blood must have become all soul to have endured four trials after the agony of Gethsemane and the desertion of the disciples. His last hours were crowded with torture. Did he ask for a miracle to be wrought when he made his petition, when he prayed that the cup might pass? He knew, however, that it was not in his will but in God's immovable law that His will should be done. He had realized this from the first, and though there might have been a momentary weakness of the flesh, it passed swiftly, and the spirit gained its strength again.

It was a long journey from Ur to Nazareth, long if the traveler went north to Harran and on through Damascus; long, too, if he went south and passed Kadesh, the seat of justice, and journeyed on through Jericho and Jerusalem. It is far longer today. The journey is harder to make, for Nazareth lies beyond us. It has ceased to be a mere name and is now a sphere of spiritual reality. It was a village two thousand years ago; it is less than a village today. Yet, it gave to man one who set a light to the torch of God's justice with a never-dying flame.

PART III

THE BIRTH OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

CHAPTER I

THE DISCIPLES AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION

One of the most disappointing tasks the Bible student can undertake is that of trying to learn from the Gospels some definite biographical matter about the disciples. Even in the case of the four fishermen we know little of their antecedents. There is no word about baptism or that they had ever heard of Jesus before they met him. Peter and his brother Andrew were the first chosen, and Peter becomes the chief of the twelve. We know more of him before the last week in Jerusalem than any other. Matthew is the only one of the other eight who has become a familiar figure, for he was the toll collector when Jesus went with Peter to Capernaum. From the question Matthew put to Peter, as they were about to enter the town, we learn the difference between toll and tax. The residents were free to come and go, but strangers had to pay the admittance fee.

We also know something of James, the brother of Jesus, and the two sons of Zebedee, but of Judas Iscariot and the others we hear little until the last week in Jerusalem. It is one of the mysteries of religious history how these simple men gained enduring fame. For nearly two thousand years the rationalists have tried in vain to fathom the depths of this mystery, but they have not succeeded. There are many such mysteries that no one has attempted to solve, for the simple reason that they are beyond the means of those who insist upon proof. It may be said that the dearest things in life lie beyond the ken of the experimentalist, or as we would say today, the scientist. Should we be wrong in advancing the notion that what the soul desires cannot be expressed in understandable terms? It is here that the agnostics and the rationalists find the barricades of reason that are insurmountable. To my mind the reason why the disciples became saintly ideals of the new religion was because they were guileless men who walked and talked with Jesus. I can find no other reason for it, and this notion, perhaps not quite according to dogma, comes to me through my experience with plain country folk, proof against rationalistic analyses; men who read out of their own lives the restraints and hardships imposed upon them. They see in the disciples men like themselves, hoping for a new era, less turmoil, less drudgery, a system of justice, and the "reign on earth" they speak of when they kneel to pray. I have known hundreds of these men, and it is no difficulty for me to comprehend what has puzzled so many about the fame of the Galileans who were with Jesus during his lifetime.

The names of the disciples have survived all religious strife, religious wars, changes of faith in dogma and ritual, and the schisms that have split the Christian world into over two hundred different denominations; and still their names are repeated day after day by millions throughout the world. Some of the wonders of architecture, built long before the sixteenth century, are named after them, and the feast days of these simple men are celebrated in the Christian churches of the world.

Mark and Luke were not disciples. John, the writer of the Fourth Gospel, came upon the scene as an evangelist, and we should not be wrong if we decided he could not have been one of the twelve. The earliest date for the Gospel under his name is A.D. 100.

The name of the reporter of the baptism of Jesus is not given. It is not likely that Peter or the other three fishermen were present on that occasion. There are so many omissions of this order that one more or less will make no difference in this survey, for the proclamation of the mission remains the dominant *motif* we have to consider. Nevertheless, the mind craves for more knowledge of what was in the original Aramaic version.

We have to turn to Luke for further information about the gathering of the disciples. There the miracle of the draught of fishes is treated in some detail. In 6:13-16 Luke gives us the names of the twelve, but we are not told, in the case of six of them, how they came to be members of the group, nor does Luke mention their trades or the place where they were found.

In the Acts of the Apostles, which is dated by Joseph Klausner between A.D. 95 and 100,[1] we find the activities of the disciples (sometimes called apostles) after the death of Jesus. The days spent in Jerusalem, when Paul was regarded as a bitter foe, indicate the stress of opposition from those in authority. In this book Peter appears as a miracle worker and suffers imprisonment.

We are astonished to find that there was a church in Jerusalem. But as to its denomination and doctrine, there is nothing to enlighten us. No church was necessary for the promulgation of the desire for a messiah. The order of the services cannot be imagined, for at that time the disciples had not decided to call themselves Christians. Indeed, the first we hear of the latter sect is that it was located in Antioch; but who carried the new religion to a place so far from Jerusalem cannot be imagined. There is no mention of one of the disciples having left the group and taken so long a journey to preach the new Gospel.

After the death of Jesus, many changes were made in ritual, notably regarding baptism: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). After this comes a passage of startling significance, for, like so many others in Acts that are put vaguely or in a mystical manner, it reveals quite clearly what was in the minds of the disciples:

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[1] *From Jesus to Paul*, p. 214.

> When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?
>
> And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power (1:6-7).

The question put by the disciples is a practical one for them, and stamps the character of the idea they had of the messiah, which Jesus had firmly rejected, first, when tempted by Satan and, afterwards, by Peter at Caesarea Philippi.

In this connection, we find in Acts the name of Jesus, without Christ, is given forty-eight times, and this fact tempts us to ask when and how the Greek word for the messiah (Christ) became linked with that of Jesus. Surely we gather from this that the minds of the disciples were not only in a state of confusion concerning the mission, but that they had no definite idea, even after the death of Jesus, of what was meant by the imperative, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice." No wonder the authorities, when they heard them, upbraided them and decided "they were unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts 4:13).

The crucifixion struck them as a crushing defeat. But the end—wiping out the past—had not come. Their hopes of a messiah of the Davidic line had not been fulfilled. They were left leaderless, an isolated group filled with despair for their future. This should be clearly understood, for it goes far to explain why, at length, they succumbed to the masterful influence of Paul.

Matthew and Mark were not biographers. The scanty information they give us about the disciples in their Gospels does not enable us to picture them as men of action. Delineation of character is far to seek in the New Testament until we come to Iscariot and Paul. As to the disciples, there is not one but Peter we can picture as a human being.

It is scarcely possible to treat this subject in a chronological way. The conflicting accounts found in the Gospels, in Acts, and in the Epistles seem to me to create difficulties with such an object in view. I tried this several times before I wrote my essays upon Jesus and upon Paul, but I failed signally in my attempt to reach a satisfactory notion of what were the sequences in time and place. I have not found in any of the New Testament scholars a single suggestion of how this can be done to advantage. It seems to me the fact is that different compilers and editors were at work upon the Gospels and Acts. The one did not know what the other was doing, and it is left to us to try to make a coherent story. Whether this is possible or not depends entirely upon the conception that is engendered by it after reflection.

We search in vain in the Gospels, Acts and the Epistles for information concerning the movement of the disciples and how they made their way to Galilee. The risen Christ bade them meet there. We learn this from Matthew, but Mark does not name the district where the meeting was to take place.

This brief treatment of events the student seeks to find explained in the chapters of the New Testament has puzzled many. How and when they reached Galilee after the panic that took place at Gethsemane are problems that the imagination fails to make clear.

The disciples were suspected by the Roman authorities, and the chief priests and elders had brought a charge of blasphemy against their leader. These were difficulties that confronted those who went north at the behest of the risen Christ. But they were only a part of their anxieties, for it must be understood that, after the celebration of the Passover, Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, must have returned with his staff to the seat of government there. And they would not make it easy for the friends of the crucified man to gather in their native province. However, these are only some of the omissions in the stories, which leave us wondering if a meeting really took place in Galilee. Some of the critics who have dealt with this period, notably Klausner and Guignebert, suggest that an interval of something like fifteen years passed unrecorded between the time of the crucifixion and the first acceptable information we have about the movements of the disciples. How it was possible for them to return to Jerusalem and organize an "Apostolic Council" (about eleven or twelve years later) is not explained. Had the high priest and elders forgotten the charges that were made when Jesus was brought before them? That is not at all likely. It is strange that the disciples should have been able to do this so soon after the persecution of the Nazarenes. We shall want to probe deeply into this period because the action of Peter and his friends at that time laid the preparatory work of carrying the words of the risen Christ to Jew and Gentile.

Another gap in the narrative of this period, which has caused the Bible students some anxiety of mind, concerns the history of Barnabas. Was Barnabas the first to carry the message of the risen Christ to the Gentiles? He suddenly comes to light in Antioch, a place nearly three hundred miles away from Jerusalem.

We are not told how Barnabas learned the story of the crucifixion, according to the interpretation of it by the disciples and, afterwards, by Paul. He is not mentioned as having been present in Jerusalem during the week of the Passover. It is still more difficult to explain how this native of Cyprus became an efficient preacher of the new Gospel. For the most part, the scholars who have dealt with this period accept the idea that the grandiose names given to the small groups in the cities of Asia Minor were invented long after Peter and Paul passed away.

Who were these groups, mostly composed of Gentiles? It is clear from many of the statements in the New Testament that they were humble folk. Undoubtedly most of them were serfs who had been devotees of the different mystery cults. And we may presume that women predominated, for the simple reason that the matter of circumcision did not concern them.

It is in this period that one of the most extraordinary revolutions of mind took place that has been recorded in the early days. How the word of the risen Christ spread in the districts of Asia Minor and Syria baffles the understanding of those who have devoted years to an elucidation of this matter. In searching for more particulars about the beginnings of the movement, we are astonished at the work that was accomplished by Barnabas and Paul. The fact that the latter was called from Tarsus to Antioch by Barnabas is evidence of the growing numbers joining the groups, and that salvation was looked for in its promise. How soon Jews and Gentiles of the better class and better means became interested in this is not recorded, but we do know that when the appeal was made to subscribe sums to those in Jerusalem who had suffered from the drought, aid was forthcoming.

Another matter that calls for consideration is the position of Peter. It is understandable that both Barnabas and Paul were Hellenized Jews, for they were of the city-areas in the north where Greek thought, habit, and ritual of the mysteries prevailed. But Peter—''fickle'' Peter, as he is called—was at no time a Hellenized Jew. He was a simple-minded fisherman from first to last. There can be no doubt about the Greek and Roman world being ready to receive the doctrine of Paul. From other sources we learn of the troubles of Christians in the great cities, particularly under Caligula and Nero. There must have been a turbulence of spirit in the peoples from the Tyrrhenian Sea, all the way across Asia to the upper reaches of the Euphrates. Christianity went on, slowly absorbing the mystery cults, but we seek in vain any record of its effect in Palestine, south of Syria. Galilee and Samaria seemed to be proof against conversion; and in Judea, the time was approaching when Jerusalem would fall under the attack of Titus.

Reasonable conjecture is a leaven of earnest inquiry. The imagination enables the research student to further the quest for facts. But a limit should be drawn between what is probable and what might be possible. This attractive pursuit has enabled venturesome historians to make sense of complicated stories in old manuscripts. Why it should be considered irreverent to use the imagination in trying to solve these difficulties, I do not know. But I remember when what were called ministers of the Gospel of many different denominations lifted their hands forbiddingly when questions on these inconsistencies were raised. It may be different now. The importance of an inquiry of this nature is not limited to the incident; it extends beyond the lifetime of any of the disciples or Paul.

Where, then, shall we look in Acts and the Epistles for information that will lead us to a clearer understanding of what might have happened? In pursuit of this, our attention is fixed upon the character of Barnabas, appearing as it were from nowhere. It was he who was responsible for bringing Paul from Tarsus after eight or nine years' seclusion in the city. How strange it is that the great missionary work of Christians should be carried on by two men who were not disciples during the lifetime of Jesus! Yet, it is to Barnabas and Paul that the spread of the new religion is to be accredited. The earliest information we have about Barnabas is to be found in Acts 4:36-37, where it is stated:

> And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,
>
> Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

This bare statement adds to the confusion of notions concerning the reformation of the group of disciples. We assume from what goes before the appearance of Barnabas that they were back at Jerusalem, and at a time when the rebellious Jewish State was suffering persecution. How was it possible, we may ask, for the chief priests and elders within two or three years, at the most, after the death of Jesus, to welcome any of his disciples? Yet, Jerusalem was to become the very center of what was afterwards called the Christian church.

Where was Barnabas when he heard about the group in Jerusalem? We have no information about the location of his estate, or his plot of land. The more important question is: How did he learn about the group in Jerusalem and their need for aid? It is these extraordinary gaps in the stories of so many of the characters and events that cause really serious students of the New Testament to use their imagination and try to weave out of the stories a tale that will stand examination.

The time lapse in Acts that is most perplexing is the one which concerns the sale of land by Barnabas and his visit to the disciples at Jerusalem. Joseph Klausner in his book, *From Jesus to Paul*, tells us that Barnabas came of a Hebrew-Aramaic speaking family, and that his ordinary speech was Greek. Klausner describes him in the following way:

> Joseph Barnabas, a goodhearted man, and . . . one not very rigid in his opinions (like Peter in this respect), but devoted to the Nazarene movement. . . .[2]

This statement makes one wonder how Barnabas was attracted to the Nazarene group, for at that time in his life it was a Galilean movement, a movement that took place in Galilee. Was it probable that Barnabas had been at a Galilean city during the mission of Jesus? He must have been a rich man, for he had lands to sell, but what his trade was we do not know. If his residence was in Antioch, as a man of commerce he might visit Tyre and Sidon, Damascus and Tiberias.

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 335.

The many channels of possible information about the mission of Jesus reaching far-outlying towns should be explored. The Gospel critics carry their ideas of the Gospel stories to the farthest limits of credulity, and there is no reason why we should be reluctant in pursuing imaginary clues that may yield some of the information that is lacking not only in the first two Gospels but in the Acts of the Apostles.

Let me here choose one that will seem far-fetched to the Gospel scholar. We know that, before Barnabas was taken with the Nazarene idea, he was Jewish in his religion and Hellenized in thought. Suppose he knew (or that he was in a position to know), that a spy had been set upon the track of Jesus by the Herodians and Pharisees. Stranger associations than this have been made and accepted by conservative historians.

This would be one way of learning what the Nazarene movement was. One part of it that would attract him, at that particular time, was that the glad tidings that Jesus gave to the people were intended for the lost sheep of Israel. There are other ways of getting information besides coming in contact with the person himself. Perhaps in his visit to the towns he learned of the antagonism of the Herodians and Pharisees toward Jesus.

When and where did Barnabas meet Paul? The difficulties increase the farther we inquire and the deeper we delve into the reports set down in Acts. We find no reference to a meeting of Barnabas and Paul at this stage, and we may, without stretching a point, assume that Paul had left Jerusalem to go to Damascus when Barnabas reached Jerusalem. Here, now, the complication becomes more and more intricate.

The use of the world "church," as we read it in Acts, tends to lead the reader astray. How could there be a church, in the Christian sense of the term, before Paul launched his theory of the risen Christ? To us the word signifies either the building or the congregation—*ecclesia*—and would have no significance whatever in describing the sacred meeting place of any group that was then in Palestine. What we now understand by the term church was utterly unknown when Acts was written. Today church means to us far more than it could possibly have meant to the Jews of the first centuries of this era. We may, therefore, decide for the present that the group Barnabas aided after he sold his land was the recalcitrant one connected with Stephen and that in Jerusalem then there was no group that could be called Christian.

It is incumbent, if we are searching for a connected story that will stand close examination, to clear our minds of matter that cannot be accepted in the records of Acts. Those who, in the interest of the rise of Christianity, sincerely desire information that will enable them to meet the criticism of the skeptics do no violence at all to the faith of believers in presenting a reasonable account of what might have taken place in this period. It devolves upon the critic, learned in Gospel lore and expert in comparing the stories in Acts and the Epistles of Paul, to consider those whose doubts are well founded, and to attempt to assure them that Paul, despite the confusions and contradictions, was the genius that made Christianity (as it was known up to the time of Eusebius and Athanasius) a new religion for Jew and Gentile. The result was more than the means.

If we are to make sense of the contradictions and variants of descriptions in the first two Gospels and Acts—comparing Matthew and Mark with the Acts of the Apostles—we should understand that different groups would ask for different instructions. It cannot be imagined that the one at Ephesus would have the same spiritual needs to be satisfied as the one at Antioch. Different groups, different sermons—and no critic will dispute the notion that many different sermons can be made from one and the same text.

Hence, the curious variety of much contained in the records in Acts compared with what is set down in the Epistles. Would it not be better for those who support the oral tradition to discontinue their search from the date of the issue of the first two Gospels, and begin from the first indication of the disciples adding apostles to their number shortly before or soon after the persecutions in Judea?

These gaps in the concluding portions of Matthew and Mark are not mere inadvertencies of a faulty recollection. Rather, they are omissions that seem deliberate. In this case the imagination does not serve us, for now we enter upon so many omissions and contradictions that we are left helpless, and the task of working out a clear story of what might have taken place fails.

CHAPTER II

THE ORAL TRADITION THEORY

One novel idea recently suggested by a New Testament author is the presentation of some of the disciples as men of superior education. This has been done in the attempt to find an author of the First Gospel. Dr. Edgar Goodspeed has selected Matthew for this honorable position, and his reason for doing so is that he was the likeliest one of the twelve to write in Greek.[1] This notion goes far to undermine the theory of the oral tradition, for Matthew heard the sermons and sayings of the master. It may be presumed that he was present at every gathering and accompanied Jesus from place to place, whether he stopped to speak to the people or went on to his destination. That the reporter who took the notes would be a person "with a familiarity with Jesus' teaching that is unparalleled" is quite probable. But that certainly does not fit Matthew.

Is it not asking too much for us to accept Dr. Goodspeed's picture of a Matthew accompanying Jesus from place to place, carrying a pencil and a notebook? The accounts we have of him in the first two Gospels are meager indeed, and there is no reference anywhere to his taking down notes. The claim of Dr. Goodspeed is a curious one in several ways. If he were capable of writing the Sermon on the Mount in Greek, would he not have been able to write it in Aramaic? For that is the tongue in which he heard it, the language he and Jesus spoke.

The Greek versions of the first two Gospels were not intended for the meek and humble of Lower Galilee or for the lost sheep of Israel. They were intended for Gentiles in the cities where Paul and Barnabas did most of their work before they separated and Paul went to the countries of the Mediterranean. None of the critics I have read, or even those of recent date whose works have been read to me, gives us the slightest evidence of there being Greeks in the villages of Galilee. What would they be doing there at a time when the province was in a state of rebellion? Suppose there were a few Greek slaves in the armies of Pompey, who found employment in the smaller towns. Would they be likely to follow the crowds who wanted to hear Jesus?

It is quite an unusual idea to make of Matthew, the mere toll collector, a man of superior education. And superior it must have been to put the Aramaic of the Sermon on the Mount into Greek. The literary hazards that confront us in the precepts are sufficient to convince us that only a scholar of great ability could have performed such a task.

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[1] *Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist*, Philadelphia and Toronto, John C. Winston Co., 1959.

Take the precepts and read them carefully. Then try to imagine the skilled shorthand writer of today, who could take down these passages in the form in which we read them, without making a single mistake. I cannot conceive how this could be done. They are so closely reasoned out, knit together with a conciseness that impresses me with the notion that parts of them were reported at different times and, after much study, were put together in the form in which they appear in the First Gospel. The precepts as we read them in Matthew 5:38-48 and 6:1-15 contain internal intricacies of speech that would escape a reportorial genius. Before he grasped the significance of the counsel for proper conduct, the penalty of neglect to conform would be ringing in his ears. When these precepts, to say nothing of the perfect economic treatise that follows (6:25 ff.), were first recorded, many of them might have been delivered in other speeches and, as gems of thought, they were taken from their context. In this way they were massed together by an expert, just as one today would set about collecting an anthology.

Dr. Goodspeed's portraiture of a refined and educated Matthew does not stop there. He rehabilitates the fisherman. If this lead is followed by other Gospel critics, we may find later on that the disciples were not simple Galileans but all persons of social distinction and marked business ability. I prefer to think of them as they are painted in the first two Gospels. When the question was asked, Why did Jesus select such men? the answer was that there was no one else in southern Galilee to be recruited. The task they had to undertake was simple enough for poor men to understand and to pass on to others: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

It is not sufficient to posit the notion that, because Matthew might have known some Greek and because it would be of service to him as a toll collector, he was the author of the First Gospel. It may be asked how it was possible for Matthew or Peter or any other disciple to hear the Sermons on the Mount and refrain from commenting upon their effect upon those who heard them. It may be that the poor and needy, the meek and the humble, including the disciples, had lost all sense of the economic and ethical pronouncements of Jesus. Are we any better disposed to these teachings than they were when they were given in Galilee?

There is something of a rebuke in Klausner's work, *Jesus of Nazareth*. In the best of all accounts of the ethical teachings, the eminent Hebrew scholar deals at great length with the signal kinship of all Jesus said to what is found in the Mishnah and the Talmud. He realizes that Jesus was a thorough Jew in his conception of right and justice. The rebuke that he makes reads as follows: "No treatment of the ethics of Jesus along the lines of objective scholarship yet exists in any language."[2]

It should be pointed out that sayings in the Mishnah and the two Talmuds that are similar to those used by Jesus are isolated and are not grouped together to form part of a complete philosophic system. It is rather difficult to follow Klausner's findings as to the originality of the sayings in the first two Gospels. He does appreciate highly what we read in them, but he seems to miss the point that whatever was coupled in the way of maxims and precepts was transmuted into perfect gems of high ethical value by Jesus. They do not read as selections taken from various sources, for one follows the other in a kind of sequence and all have the same mark of continuity of thought coming from one mind.

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[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 381*n*.

This should be clearly understood because it is important in estimating the evidence for and against the oral tradition. And here we should consider how an oral tradition comes to be. The phrase seems to indicate that it was passed on from family to family until it was written down. To me this means that not one of the disciples could possibly have remembered the ethical teachings of Jesus, let alone any of the other sayings that are consonant with his philosophy. I doubt whether it was possible for Matthew or any other disciple to have recited the economic portion of the sermon, or sermons, for one sentence leads to another as only a skilled speaker could render them. I consider that one who gives long thought to a particular subject and masters the way that he will express it is a skilled teacher. That much thought was given to the economic portion of the philosophy must be plain to anyone who has a notion of the intention of Jesus that justice must prevail and that the only way to seek it is in fulfilling the Law, the Law laid down in Deuteronomy, the Law all the prophets called upon Israel to restore.

It might be asked of the advocates of the oral tradition if there were anyone else in Palestine during the lifetime of Jesus who might have heard him speak and, knowing the value of what he said, remembered with amazing accuracy the sections of Matthew referred to above. There were no apostles then, and Luke had not come upon the scene to inform Theophilus of the mission of the mystical Christ. Is there a person mentioned in the first two Gospels who was not a disciple or related to one, who might have been the source of the oral tradition? I cannot think of one.

It is now urged by several theologians that the source of the material from which the first two Gospels were made was mere hearsay. The arguments in favor of this new view are worked out with skill and, indeed, they are persuasive and call for a review of the whole findings on the problem since the eighteenth century when Reimarus and Lessing were making their scholarly contributions.

One eminent authority who subscribes to this theory is Joachim Jeremias. His work is a challenge to those who have been under the impression that the Gospels recorded all that was to be said about Jesus and his disciples. Professor Jeremias states the firm conviction:

> . . . In the first place, for a long period all the tradition about Jesus, his sayings, and deeds, his life, death, and resurrection, was purely oral. . . . And so it remained for some thirty-five years. . . .[3]

Then in a footnote, he states emphatically:

> Much has been written about pre-Markan written traditions, but all of it is hypothetical. It is improbable that Mark is based upon written sources; the written "sayings source" is in our opinion pure fantasy. . . .[4]

Dr. Frederick C. Grant seems to have departed from the views he held when he wrote *The Economic Background of the Gospels*. In his most recent work, *The Gospels*, he writes:

> It goes without saying that the earliest evangelical narratives were oral. . . . The existence of oral tradition is not only a basic presupposition of the written gospels, whose form and contents can by no means be explained otherwise; but we actually have evidence of the existence of this tradition in the period prior to the earliest of them. . . .[5]

There is something vague about the last sentence, for it does not inform us how those who passed on the oral tradition achieved such a remarkable feat of memory in the period of persecution, disappointment and fear that beset the disciples after Jesus was crucified.

Dr. Grant's analytical examination of the oral tradition theory will cause considerable stir, and I have no doubt that those who have relied upon an Aramaic version may start a debate that may last a long time. On these problems of language and what is called the oral tradition, there is a work of prime importance that has been neglected by the Gospel scholars. I read it several times after it was published, and it seemed to me a clarifying exposition of the difficulties of Gospel scholars. The book is *The Riddle of the New Testament* by Sir Edwyn Hoskyns and Noel Davey, two eminent scholars holding distinguished positions at Cambridge University. They write as follows:

> . . . The New Testament documents were, no doubt, written in a language intelligible to the generality of Greek-speaking people; yet to suppose that they emerged from the background of Greek thought and experience would be to misunderstand them completely. There is a strange and awkward element in the language which not only affects the meanings of words, not only disturbs the grammar and syntax, but lurks everywhere in a maze of literary allusions which no ordinary Greek man or woman could conceivably have understood or even have detected.
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> The truth is that behind these writings there lies an intractable Hebraic, Aramaic, even Palestinian material. It is this foreign matter

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[3] *Unknown Sayings of Jesus*, trans. by R. H. Fuller, London, S.P.C.K., 1957.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 3*n*.

[5] *Op. cit.*, London, Faber and Faber, 1957, p. 27.

> which complicates New Testament Greek. Each writer is to a greater or lesser degree struggling to interpret into Greek a non-Greek method of thought and a non-Greek terminology. . . .[6]

This work states the problem of language in the grammatical terms employed by the experts in this science. The authors of *The Riddle of the New Testament* expound convincingly the thoroughness of the idea held for so many years by the scholars that the origin of the Gospels in Greek must have been an Aramaic version. Those who would today reject the idea of an Aramaic origin—oral or written—have not attempted to explain the patent fact that stands out in the first two Gospels: that two entirely separate ideas are in conflict. It is this peculiar combination of two ideals that forces me to the conclusion that there would have been no Gospels at all if the sayings of Jesus had not been taken down by some person unknown, who was present when he spoke them.

The idea of an Aramaic original is given further support by a French scholar, Dom Celestin Charlier, in the new English translation of his book, *The Christian Approach to the Bible*. He states:

> . . . Aramaic was probably the original language of many texts which we now have only in a Greek translation, the book of *Tobit* for example and *St. Matthew's* Gospel, and perhaps the Fourth Gospel too. It was also Christ's own language and that of the early Christians. . . .[7]

This analysis is especially helpful to the student in pointing up the importance of language as the expression of a mentality and emphasizing the need for "getting inside this mentality if we are to understand the New Testament."

It may not be amiss for us to look a little closer at this problem of an oral tradition in case the matter reaches the platform or pulpit and the plain man is somewhat mystified by what he hears from the lecturer or the minister. It will not be easy for either of these worthy persons to state his case in simple terms, and I do not hesitate to say that in this matter we shall find, as we have done so often before in other debates, that the auditor at a lecture or a service may leave more confused than ever.

Let us ask ourselves, what is meant by the phrase or term "oral tradition"? Does it mean a description of a person, what he said, or an event, given by an eye and ear witness? Surely that would be the start of an oral tradition. It would then be passed "by word of mouth" which, to use the common phrase, is hearsay, and it would pass on from man to man until it became traditional in the sense that generations had passed since the story began. If this be an adequate description, we may add that by the time the

[6] *Op. cit.*, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931, pp. 24-5.

[7] *Op. cit.*, trans. by H. J. Richards and B. Peters, Westminster, Maryland, Newman Press, 1959, pp. 44-8.

oral tradition reached the writing stage it would have little or no likeness to the person who spoke or the event that occurred in the long past.

The best example in classical writings, whether they are Scripture or history, is the early Books of the Old Testament. No one will deny this, but in the case of the first two Gospels there was no necessity for an oral tradition, for there were eleven men, disciples of Jesus, who were alive for almost a generation after the crucifixion. Only two of the eleven are considered as recorders of what happened in the master's lifetime, and doubt is thrown upon the story presumably related to Papias by the presbyter. We have no information of the death of any disciple before Peter died. If this be the situation, there was no need of the oral tradition, for we know that it was possible to put down in writing what has been accepted as historic in the description of Jesus. As early as the time of the stoning of Stephen, Paul had letters from the religious authority at Jerusalem. The date when the Epistle to the Galatians appeared was about the year A.D. 45. These two instances of written documents are sufficient evidence of the possibility of an original version in Aramaic which contained no Pauline matter.

What was to prevent a scribe, wishing to know the facts of the ministry of Jesus, questioning a disciple and hearing from him nearly everything but the Sermon on the Mount? That is one possibility; but if the oral tradition depends on such slender evidence of a disciple giving to a scribe (or other reporter) the incidents of the mission and many of the sayings, its advocates will have to reconsider the position they have taken in the matter and find another term more easily understood. Perhaps the weakest point of all in the argument for an oral tradition is the suggestion that the Gospels of Matthew and Mark were first issued in Greek.

The desire to lift the disciples socially and intellectually above their simple callings does not fit them for the field work of spreading the glad tidings among people of their own class. Surely it is reasonable to think of them as "unlearned and ignorant" and of no higher intelligence than that of their fellows. Jesus was not deceived about their qualifications. There are passages which indicate clearly that he was conscious of their inability to understand the philosophy he taught. In trying to advance the notion that Matthew was written by a disciple, in Greek, and that in all probability Jesus knew some Greek, our critics overlook the recorded facts of the condition of the country in which they worked. Greek might have been spoken in the towns, but the only one we are sure that Jesus entered was Capernaum. His reference to Chorazim and Bethsaida is vague, and there is doubt as to his entering those cities.

It might be asked in this connection of what use would a knowledge of Greek have been to Jesus and his disciples. It cannot be maintained that they read it, and Greek was not taught in the synagogue schools. It was the language (as nearly all the critics from the time of Wellhausen maintain) of the educated classes and the merchants. We might say it was the language of the library and the market, and perhaps even in saying so much, we are going farther than the case admits, for Greek could not have been the official language of the Roman administrators. All the proclamations and edicts would be spoken or written in Latin, with translations in Aramaic, not in Greek. For the officials and clerks in the cities would be appointed by the Roman governors.

Why should Roman officials use Greek when they prized their own tongue highly and had no need whatever to learn Greek to transact business with the few who spoke that language at that time? Let us not forget that all this took place in Galilee, under a Roman appointee, Herod Antipas. Certainly the Herodians have never been presented as Greek scholars.

In 1927, Professor Henry J. Cadbury, in a remarkable book for that period, stated the case as he understood it to be recognized at the time. I strongly urge students to obtain a copy of this work, for it deals thoroughly with the evidence for and against the Aramaic original. He says:

> . . . It has recently been urged for all the gospels and for at least the first half of Acts that they are literal translations of continuous writings in the Aramaic tongue. The novelty of this suggestion (it is not really new but quite old), its implication of primitiveness and the cleverness and assurance with which it is supported, give it an attractiveness quite in excess of its own inherent probability. . . .[8]

To me the problem seems simple, and I cannot understand what all the trouble is about. Surely, at best, this is a matter that concerns the theological scholars only. The man for whom the New Testament was intended could not possibly become interested in this controversy. He reads what is set down in the Gospels, and the first two contain all that is necessary to satisfy his desire for information concerning the life of Jesus.

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[8] *The Making of Luke-Acts*, New York, Macmillan, 1927, p. 70.

CHAPTER III

THE SOURCE OF THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW AND MARK

From the days of Harnack down to the present decade, the changing views of many of the Gospel scholars have led to problems of the language spoken by Jesus and the disciples, and problems of the source of Matthew and Mark, which today are as far from solution as they were at any time in the past. The student who has followed the works of recent writers, such as Dr. Goodspeed (in *Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist*) and Dr. Grant (in *The Gospels*) must realize, if he remembers the work performed by Streeter, Klausner, Manson and Guignebert, that we are now entering upon a stage when paradox follows paradox and opens up a reconsideration of the character of the disciples. In this respect the question posed is: *Were the disciples simple Galileans speaking one tongue, or were they literate, in some degree, and competent to learn a tongue for which they would have no use?*

No Bible scholar, so far, has given a clear reason why Matthew should be singled out as a disciple competent to write the First Gospel. I have dealt with his occupation in a previous chapter, and it is unnecessary to go into that again. He might, however, have had a smattering of the Greek dialect, *koinē*, that was current in the cities to the north, but that would not be sufficient to accredit him with the authorship of the First Gospel. The deeper we look into this complicated problem, the more confused we become in our attempt to find a distinct reason for the Bible scholars' rejecting an Aramaic original. Their purpose, so it seems, is to give some validity to the contradictory versions expressed in Matthew and Mark. The one is that of the Baptist and Jesus: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; and the other one is the conception that Paul had of the crucifixion. The former is quite distinct from the latter. Indeed, the Christ idea of Paul would never have entered the heads of the disciples during the lifetime of Jesus.

From this we are again presented with the idea of the oral tradition for the Gospels. By the time the first one was issued, a full generation after the death of Jesus, there might have been at least a dozen versions—or even more—that had merely an oral origin. In the first verse of the Third Gospel, Luke tells Theophilus that "many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us" (Luke 1:1). This statement is illuminating and should not be put aside as one that came perhaps nearly a generation after the date given to Mark. Now from whom did the so-called oral tradition emanate? Those who were in a position to speak of what occurred during the mission of Jesus are well known. After the crucifixion there were eleven disciples, and each one was an eye and ear witness of the events of his life and the sayings he uttered.

But how soon after the leader passed away were they called upon to tell the story to persons who were capable of writing it out, with the precision revealed in the greater part of the first two Gospels? There must have been some efficient scribes in Palestine to have taken down the stories of disciples who, during the lifetime of their master, never dreamed for a moment that his teaching would interest any Jew, orthodox or Hellenized. We know they did not understand him. Indeed, they were rebuked several times, and the reason for this is perfectly clear. Their minds were fixed upon the coming of a political messiah in the line of the House of David. And to them a philosophy of life in which two masters could not be served was the very opposite of their fervent hopes.

After the resurrection, they asked him about the restoration of the kingdom (Acts 1:6). Those of us who have studied the events of the mission closely imagine that this question was put to Jesus after the failure of the pilgrimage of the pairs who were sent out to preach "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was at that time the dissensions among the disciples called for the rebuke of Jesus. The passages that relate what was in the minds of the sons of Zebedee prove conclusively that the thought of the disciples was given to matters of precedence when Jesus would be enthroned in Jerusalem: "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory" (Mark 10:37, or the other version in Matthew 20:21).

Still, one of the mysteries that baffles all attempts at solution is how these simple Galileans—quarreling amongst themselves, short of food, probably followed from place to place—remained with Jesus until the night of the disaster in Gethsemane. When this matter has been discussed with me, I have been nonplused in trying to explain it. The only reply I could give my questioner was to say, "Only simple men could have endured the strain."

In trying to make a connected story that will bear investigation, I would advise the Gospel scholars to be satisfied with the evidence that we have in Matthew and Mark that the disciples were unlearned and ignorant men, ready to endure privation for the belief that Jesus would probably be the messiah and that they would enjoy the blessings of preferment. To try to make of them other than they were is to alter the conception that we have held of their homely character. If we accept them at their own worth, we cannot withstand the sympathy we feel for them in their anxious trials. If we give to them an understanding beyond what we consider to be necessary for an intelligent man, we run the danger of accrediting them with traits that are only too often found in calculating persons.

We can forgive them for not understanding the philosophy of Jesus, which was far beyond their mentality. And we know only too well how simple men fall easy prey to a dominant personality such as that of Paul. Other shortcomings of the disciples, after the crucifixion, reveal their artless habit of mind. If this estimate of the mind and character of the eleven is acceptable, we may well ask, as some of the critics of fifty years ago did ask searchingly, how they remembered not only the incidents of the mission, but the sayings presented with the precision of a master-writer.

No Gospel scholar has, so far, to my recollection been able to explain how the Sermon on the Mount came to be recorded in Matthew (but not in Mark) a generation after the death of Jesus. And I have yet to read a line by a critic that tells me he is curious about the omission of the term "Christ" in chapters 5, 6 and 7 of Matthew.

When it was asked many years ago why ministers of the Gospel, in their churches of various denominations, seldom referred to the Sermon on the Mount, no satisfactory reply was forthcoming. The real difficulty about this was the anarchistic implication expressed in the precepts. Many times I discussed this matter with Nonconformist ministers without reaching any sensible notion of why they refrained from doing so. The usual explanation of the neglect was, "They are so impracticable."

It seems to me the Gospel scholars, who have recently put forth these ideas about the language problem as it concerns the speech of the disciples, and about the way in which the stories of the life and mission of Jesus came to be recorded in Greek, raise one of the most important riddles with which we have to deal.

We might ask: Which one of the disciples was competent to remember the Sermon on the Mount after the lapse of over thirty years? Has any critic ventured to mention any prodigy of memory, ancient or modern, who could perform such a feat? The trials and tribulations of the disciples and the apostles were so grievous, so disheartening, that memory of what had been could scarcely survive. The present ill enchains the mind to the gnawing pain, whether it be physical or mental. The trouble seems to me to arise from the notion that the scholars do not realize the difference between retaining *spoken* words they were not prepared to hear and *printed* matter they have read. It is all so different now when we have the written accounts to fall back upon to refresh the memory. There were no such documents the disciples could refer to until transcripts were drawn from the first Greek translation of the source, an Aramaic one.

Moreover, there was not one disciple who was interested in the Sermon on the Mount. Can it be gainsaid that they had any other thought than that expressed several times: a messiah of flesh and bone, according to the Jewish idea, one that stemmed from the House of David? At no time did Jesus give them the slightest hope for the advent of such a messiah. Many of those who came to the meetings were suffering from physical and spiritual ailments, hoping for miracles of a curative nature to be performed, which indicates that the minds of those who thronged to hear Jesus or *see him* were in no mood to listen to a philosophical discourse of a way of life for the individual. Try to picture what the multitudes were like who came from so many different parts. We may count out at once any that were of the cities: the well-to-do, the better-educated, all those who might be classed as Hellenistic Jews or Gentiles. They would not have the slightest interest in any of the reports of his wonder-working power, for there had been many before him, such as Simon Magus and other sorcerers, whose fame flared up for a short time and then died out without honor.

We know from the beatitudes the kind of people Jesus looked upon at these gatherings. They were the meek and lowly, the poor and needy, the people of the hamlets, those who worked upon the soil, or made furniture for the house and tools for the garden. Could the disciples have been recruited from any other people? Was there one of the twelve who has been accredited with a talent above that of the ordinary villager, one whose mind was on the alert for a new Gospel? There is not one.

Perhaps the modern mind, now that it is the victim of the hearing and the seeing gadgets, is not capable of trying to solve these problems. Indeed, to a great extent, we are hindered by the fact that so much that concerns us day in and day out is recorded. It is often remarked now that conversation, as it was known to enlightened people before the era of the telephone, is rarely heard. It was very different in the time when the mission of Jesus was conducted in the villages of Galilee. There were then no preparatory notices of a meeting to be addressed by a speaker, such as is common nowadays. When we go to church we are in a mood to listen to the sermon, and, when we attend a lecture, our minds are receptive to take in what we will hear. This was not the case when the Sermon on the Mount was delivered. No one knew there would ever be a reason for remembering anything that was said. How many of the throng that traveled long distances to hear Jesus were drawn to him by reports of his sermons? Surely we may say, from the information we gather in Matthew and Mark, that the vast majority of them were more interested in the miracles he worked than in the addresses he gave. They brought those ailing from physical and spiritual maladies to be cured, and the hope of receiving aid for these ills would be the dominant thought in their minds.

Taking these considerations into account, we are at a loss to know who of the disciples or of the congregations paid heed to the beatitudes and the precepts. There are so many ways of applying tests to these problems of language and what is called oral tradition that to deal with them comprehensively would take a fairly large book.

Jesus spoke to the people in Aramaic. No one has suggested that the people could have understood him if he spoke Hebrew or Greek. And it is here that some of the scholars find themselves confronted with the language question of how addresses given in Aramaic came to be translated into Greek. This prompts a question that has puzzled me: Was it possible for anyone in that day in Palestine—whether a Herodian or a Pharisee—to set down in Greek shorthand the Aramaic words as they were spoken by Jesus? The question seems so absurd that it is scarcely worth putting. It could not possibly be done. There was no Jerome in Palestine at that time. But even in the case of translating the Latin Vulgate from the Hebrew, it must be remembered that he was not listening to someone speaking; he had the Hebrew text to refer to.

How the first Greek translation of the speeches Jesus gave to the people during his mission was made is something of a mystery. Suppose the spy was a Roman who spoke Greek fluently. It would be necessary for him to be skilled in the Aramaic tongue. If, on the other hand, his people had come to Palestine from Greece at the time of the Macedonian invasion, he might have become a fluent speaker of the Aramaic.

However, when we go into all these bypaths that open up in this search for reasons for the Greek translation, we should not overlook the fact that it was in Galilee that the Herodians and Pharisees decided to lay a trap for Jesus. The tetrarch was educated in Rome, and the conduct of the business of his office would be in Latin. Hence, we might imagine the one who reported what was said at the meeting in Aramaic might have been the one who made a Latin translation for the administration. It is not probable that it would at first have been in Greek. So there would have been two copies in Aramaic: one for the Herodians to give to Antipas; one for the Pharisees to give to the high priest.

The only possible way out of this difficulty is to give to the spy a purely personal motive quite other than that of reporting to the authorities—a motive of an intellectual character, in that the philosophy of Jesus awoke in him all that he had learned of the schools of the Stoa. He would quickly realize that there was none of this of interest to the tetrarchy and that the mission of Jesus was so profound in its philosophical interpretation that the people who heard him would never be roused to take action against the State.

To follow up the lead we have given of a spy set on the track of Jesus, we might remind the reader that the type of man we imagine was chosen for this work would not be a rarity in that part of Palestine. By "rare" I mean in respect to speaking the chief languages fluently. There are instances of linguists we could take from several sources. Let one suffice. Klausner, in describing Barnabas, gives to him the accomplishments of speaking Aramaic and Greek. Now this man came from Cyprus and was of a Hebrew family. How many more were there in and about the great cities of Syria, Lebanon and Cilicia that were like him, men who would be engaged in commerce or acting in the local office of the Roman administration?

We shall have to return to Barnabas several times, for he is a key personage, before the visit of Paul to Palestine. It was he who was instrumental in launching the new ideas concerning the mission of Jesus, that were afterwards adapted by Paul and formed the nucleus of the Christian movement. The importance of this character can scarcely be overestimated because, if Klausner is approximately correct in his description of him, he was the one and only man mentioned in the New Testament who could have translated the Aramaic version into pure Greek, for pure it must have been to begin with.

The story of Barnabas' relations with Peter and the other disciples at Jerusalem raises the language question again. Here it is of the greatest importance, for we know from the Gospels and Acts that they were not learned men. Their native tongue was Aramaic. They would have no use for Hebrew or Greek. Are we, then, to understand that Barnabas, a Levite of Cyprus, spoke the same tongue used by the disciples? This is a question not so difficult to answer as it appears, for we know from the archaeologists and such learned men as Dupont-Sommer and Sabatino Moscati that the western thrust of the Arameans went as far as the shores of the Mediterranean in cultural influence and speech. Therefore, we may decide, for the nonce, that, when Barnabas met the disciples, he spoke the same language they used. The authorities on this particular matter of speech tell us that Aramaic became the tongue of the common people after the Aramean imperialists failed as a ruling force. Further, Professor Dupont-Sommer says, in *Les Araméens*:

> L'araméen continua longtemps à se parler et à s'écrire en Palestine. A l'époque du Christ, il était la seule langue courante pour la masse du peuple; c'est l'araméen que parlaient Jésus et les Apôtres. C'est en araméen que se faisaient, dans les synagogues, la lecture des livres sacrés: ainsi naquirent les "Targums," qui sont des traductions araméennes de la Bible, plus ou moins paraphrasées.[1]

I could mention books of several of the experts who have written upon the Old and New Testaments, who deal with the language problem. One of the clearest expositions of this will be found in Sir Frederic Kenyon's work, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*.[2] The authors I have read agree that the speech of the people of the time of Jesus was Aramaic.

I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of unraveling the language problem, for our understanding of it is essential if we are to piece together an acceptable design for the original of the Greek version used by the evangelists of the first two Gospels. Without the Aramaic original, we are left groping in darkness as to how we have come to know anything of the mission of the prophet of Nazareth. The question to be decided is whether Aramaic was, or was not, the language used by the disciples. Language, therefore, is one of the keys that must fit the lock that opens the chamber of suppressed facts.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 99.

[2] Revised ed. by A. W. Adams, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1958, pp. 94 ff.

CHAPTER IV

ARAMAIC, THE NATIVE TONGUE

I am at a loss to understand why so many of the Gospel critics seem to pass over the duration of the occupations of Alexander and Pompey. After the former had reduced Tyre, he overthrew the city of Samaria and then moved on to Gaza. His objective was the Nile. There is little information to be gleaned concerning the administrations set up by the Macedonian conqueror in any other part of Palestine but Samaria. We are told that Judea was an easy prey for his legions. Most of the conduct of local matters was carried out in Syria and Lebanon. It is well for us to think of this in connection with the language question. To what extent Greek was spoken in the cities when Alexander went south, we do not know. Still, we may be sure that for long years before he was born, Greek culture had followed Greek trade in all these territories bounded by the Mediterranean and the Euphrates.

For over 250 years after his invasion of Palestine, we learn little or nothing from the historians about the lot of the common people. We may be sure, however, that in the wake of the armies, there were many Macedonians and remnants of Alexander's allies who took root in the conquered provinces. But for how long would these people, if they were settled in the small towns and hamlets, hold to the speech in daily affairs that had been common to them before the invasion? When we consider what can take place in a period of seven or eight generations, we find it difficult to think that the newcomers would teach their speech to the natives. Would that be at all likely over so long a period? To my mind it is far more reasonable to imagine that the visitors would be obliged to learn the speech of those who were in possession of the land before it was conquered.

Therefore, the idea that Greek became a tongue that was understood and spoken by the common folk will not bear examination. That this is a correct view to take of it is proved convincingly by the fact that so far as Galilee was concerned, nearly all the scholars agree that Jesus and his disciples spoke Aramaic.

But this is not all. An examination of what might have taken place after the invasion by the Romans does not further the argument now being put forth by some of our critics concerning Galileans' knowledge of Greek. How is it possible for authors who hold such views to ignore Rome's characteristic imperial methods in territories under her rule? The changes that would be effected by the rules and regulations of the Roman authorities would not be issued in Greek. It is hard to conceive that they would be in any tongue other than Latin and Aramaic in such a province as Galilee.

This form of announcement would hold good for the well-to-do in the cities and for those who were in the villages and hamlets. By the time Jesus began his mission, there had been two generations under Roman rule in Galilee, and it is not unreasonable to decide that Greek had become a language used only by the leisured classes. Even in the case of merchants from abroad, they would be obliged to respect the regulations under which trade would be carried on. For the impositions of tribute and tax collected by the Roman fiscal authorities would be issued in documents written in Latin, not in Greek. One is tempted to labor this question, which is now assuming bewildering cross-currents of opinion, for there are so many ways opened by the problems that it raises. At the risk of being condemned for carrying the analysis too far, I shall be obliged to go more deeply into these problems, and bring to the notice of the Gospel student the opinions of eminent scholars upon this matter. These have not appealed to some of the recent authors who have revived problems of language and the source of the first two Gospels, which many thought were near the stage of settlement years ago.

We might have a better understanding of what was taking place under Roman rule in the provinces if we pause to consider the effect of the stimulus that was given to commerce by the imperial power. Language is and has always been so much a means of conducting trade transactions that we cannot afford to overlook it in determining the astonishing change that took place after Palestine was conquered. No matter what the shortcomings might have been, the desire to foster trade was not one of them. The old expression, "No trade, no tribute," held good in the case of Rome. Rome had no favorites, and I think this is clearly shown in that admirable essay in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, by F. Oertel. From this brilliant description of her mercantile successes, we learn:

> . . . Alongside this primitive economic form there were higher developments: export and import firms, with great warehouses, which did not solely depend on chance sale or chance supply, but maintained steady business connections; and trading concerns, or producing and trading companies, which had their agencies, at various centres, such as Puteoli, Rome, Ostia, and Alexandria, and at countless other points within and without the Empire. . . .[1]

This is an indication of how far afield the language was carried by trade. The merchants were of many tongues, but when it came to the matter of the exchange of goods, we may be sure Latin was the medium that was used. The rules and regulations of the departments that had control of these affairs would be issued in Latin, and we may be certain that, as Roman ingenuity encouraged trade in every direction where she had power, Greek became a language of culture and lost its significance as one of common use.

[1] "The Economic Unification of the Mediterranean Region: Industry, Trade and Commerce," *loc. cit.*, Vol. X, ch. XIII, p. 413.

Perhaps none of this affects the people in the villages of such provinces as Galilee. But we should remember that Antioch, Damascus, Palmyra and Tyre were only a few of the great cities north of Palestine that are mentioned as thriving centers of great commercial activity. And these were some of the cities that were the first to hear of the new religion of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Who, then, were the people in the days of Paul for whom the first two Gospels were issued in the Greek language? There can be little doubt that they were chiefly the downtrodden and slaves, the wretched survivors of the economic consequences of the wars of Alexander, not in Palestine, but in the cities to the north.

There were only two disciples mentioned in the first two Gospels who could have been the fountainheads of the oral tradition. We know so little about them and their linguistic ability that we hesitate to place much faith in the conjectures set out by many of the Gospel critics. James Vernon Bartlet, in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,[2] takes us about as far as the story of Mark can be elaborated. He seems to think that he was the young man mentioned in the Second Gospel, where we read:

> And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him . . . (14:51).

The first question that arises concerning the identity of this young man is why, if he were Mark, his name is withheld in the Second Gospel.

We have no definite knowledge of the appearance of Mark and the role he was to play until the year A.D. 46. And then it is sparse enough at that. It was in that year that he accompanied his cousin Barnabas from Jerusalem to Antioch. Later we learn that he visited Cyprus, and in some of the Epistles he is mentioned as visiting cities north of Syria (Acts 13:5, 13). He seems to have been a busy traveler.

What is surprising is the statement by Bartlet: "When Mark reappears it is in Paul's company at Rome, as a fellow-worker joining in salutations to Christians at Colossae" (Col. 4:10; Philem. 24). If this were so, Mark would be serving two masters preaching different gospels. For a long time the notion was held that he was attached to Peter so closely that it was from the disciple he wrote down the principal events recorded in the Second Gospel. Here it might be said is where the oral tradition begins, for we have no evidence that Mark knew Jesus or saw him. May we then say that Mark spoke Aramaic and wrote Greek, for it has not been established that Peter knew any other tongue than that of the Galilean fishermen and peasants.

It is not easy to imagine that Mark was in Rome serving Peter and Paul, even at different times during their short stay. We do know that Paul thought Mark was unreliable, which was the reason why he left him with Barnabas.

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[2] "St. Mark," 14th ed., XIV, 909.

There are critics who do not accept the idea that Peter was ever in Rome, but if he were there and gave to Mark his reminiscences of what happened in Palestine during the lifetime of Jesus, his speech would be Aramaic. Some of the critics may find a reason why Matthew spoke a little Greek, but no one I have read goes so far as to state that Peter was a bi-linguist. All these confusions and contradictory narrations make our task of deciding what was the original source of the first two Gospels an extremely complex one. There were no doubt men who had known and worked with Jesus living when the Greek accounts of Pauline interpretations were needed for the separate groups to whom the glad tidings were taken, in defiance of the strict instructions of Jesus. This, however, is a slender thread to attach to the oral tradition. There are many cases that can be considered against it. The first one is the memory test, and no one I have read has approached it from this crucial point. No one has said that there was any reason for them, that is, Matthew, Peter, and perhaps Mark believing that there would be a demand for such accounts of the life of Jesus as are contained in the first two Gospels.

There are so many other questions arising out of a consideration of these problems that it would take pages to cover them all. One, for example, is the extraordinary variations that abound in the first two Gospels when they are checked by certain passages in Acts and the Epistles accredited to Paul. Another one of the main reasons why we cannot accept the opinion of those who support the oral tradition is that, if the first narrators are selected for the sources, the oral stories would be given in Aramaic, not in Greek.

Again, the oral tradition has received something of a rebuff in Dr. Goodspeed's new book, *Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist.* He has written an engaging story concerning the authorship of the First Gospel, and he gives Matthew full credit for writing it. In that case an oral tradition would not have been necessary, but how is the old difficulty to be solved concerning the omissions in one and the other and the various descriptions of the same event? After thinking this problem over for several years, I was forced to the conclusion that the first two Gospels are parts of one Greek translation. I seldom touched upon this because it was not easy for me to show that the one referred to here was the Greek translation of the Aramaic source that went by the name Quelle. This may give the reader a notion of how the problems multiply in determining the source and the language of Matthew and Mark. I asked myself at that time why Mark omitted the Sermon on the Mount and why the Virgin birth was not mentioned by him. There were other questions of a like nature.

I could reach no other conclusion than that Matthew was the first transcript for village people or those of small towns where it was not at all likely the occupation authorities under Rome would notice any seditious statements in the preaching of the apostles. And Mark omitted much of what is contained in Matthew, particularly the precepts, because that version was intended for the people of the towns where the Hellenized Jews would be found.

There is another point the advocates of the oral tradition should consider in regard to the language question. Some of them seem to think it was incumbent on the part of poor fishermen and a toll-booth collector to learn Greek, so that they might use that language when Greek-speaking customers bought fish or asked what the toll was to pass into a town. This seems to me to be a very one-sided notion of the language problem. I find it difficult to believe that the so-called Hellenized people of the towns—probably many of them established long before Alexander's campaigns, such as merchant families—did not learn Aramaic so that they could do their business with the common people quickly and precisely. It is not to be thought for a moment that a Hellenized Jewess, affluent and well-educated, would waste time, when she was marketing, on discussing politics or the latest production at the theatre. Speaking Aramaic would be a practical matter.

So far as the method by which the Romans conducted business is concerned, they would be obliged to engage educated people who spoke Aramaic. Nearly all administrative duties would be concerned with the going and coming of the populace. No one I have read ventures to claim that Latin became the language of the better-educated of Jew and Gentile or that the small folk in the towns and country could speak it. The more one thinks about this language question, the more one has to delve deeper and deeper into the economic, political, and social conditions that were prevalent from the time of Pompey's invasion until Paul passed away in Rome.

Let us consider other pertinent tests that may be applied in determining the grounds for the oral theory. I realize that it is hard for the student to work this out through a series of disconnected episodes and mystical insertions that are obviously Pauline. Nevertheless two quite different narratives may, after some serious consideration, be constructed from the material in Matthew and Mark. In both of these we shall find contradictions in aim and purpose, but they need not gravely affect the points at issue. The first one of importance is the story of Jesus the man. He was a carpenter's son and nothing definite is told of him until he has reached the age of some thirty years. He is known to many when he begins his mission. His brothers and his mother, together with neighbors, know him to be the son of Joseph, his father. Whether any of the disciples, save James, knew or heard of Jesus before he spoke to Peter for the first time is not revealed.

The second story is concerned with the miracles, practical and mystical, that he performed; a Virgin mother; descent from the House of David; and the fulfillment of certain prophecies. Both these accounts touch and overlap at certain points. The theologians are well conscious of that, though one does not necessarily dispute the other as they are recorded in the first two Gospels. In connection with an important one mentioned in the second narrative, I have not found in any book during the past few years a competent analysis of the work of fulfilling the prophecies. And as so much of the account of the mystical figure depends upon prophetic declarations, it might be asked if any theologian really imagines that the prophet Isaiah and his contemporaries dreamed that a Galilean philosopher to be born seven or eight hundred years away would bring a new era to Israel.

It was this doubt of the value of the prophecies that brought about the saying, "Long distance prophecies are also miracles." In this connection it is not clear that anyone who knew him during his lifetime thought of the prophecies. It was not until he had passed away that the work of fulfilling them began. All references to prophecies put into the mouth of Jesus clearly reveal the late period of finding biblical authority for the mystical figure that became the Christ.

It might be well for the student to take Dr. Grant's new work and compare it with Dr. Goodspeed's. In the former there is a somewhat meticulous examination of the Gospels; and in Dr. Goodspeed's, a really novel interpretation of Matthew. But both are imbued with the idea that Christianity was in the minds of Jew and Gentile during the lifetime of Jesus. Both our authors seem to be under the impression that a disciple or someone else who heard Jesus speak imagined that what he said would be needed by a church—a group of poor Christians in a city beyond the frontiers of Galilee. This is a notion that pervades much of the work of men who have published books during the past five years. It really is a method of looking back to the period before Paul appeared upon the scene, to find some reason or another for what they call the Greek translation of the Gospels. But no one during the lifetime of Jesus ever thought of his mission and his sayings being needed for any Gentiles. They were specifically for the "lost sheep of Israel." The attitude that is taken by Dr. Grant and Dr. Goodspeed places Jesus in a position that he never intended to occupy. Nothing that can be attributed directly to him—nothing that is of his philosophy or a straight saying in any of the books after Mark that is consonant with it even hints at a church, Christian or otherwise.

Did he really mean what he said? "You cannot serve two masters." If he did mean it, it puts the messiahship completely out of the count. When he said, "You cannot serve God and mammon" was he sincere? How can you think of a political system—king rule or messiah rule—destitute of worshipers of mammon? It might be asked, what is a church for? It is only necessary to express it in one word—prayer, which includes worship. But he said, You must pray in secret, not in public as the Pharisees do.

Have those who place their faith in Greek renditions of what happened and what was said during his lifetime really considered what strange contradictions abound in their findings? Those who support the theory of the oral tradition have ignored the texture of most of the passages in Matthew containing his own sayings. They miss the concise philosophical quality of most of them, and they are deeply concerned about who could have recorded them. Dr. Goodspeed says:

> And if not Matthew, what author of this Gospel can we conjure up? He would have to be a Jew, well equipped also in Greek, with a familiarity with Jesus' teaching that is unparalleled, and one who reported it with an authority no one can challenge. . . .[3]

[3] *Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist*, p. 42.

CHAPTER V

SAUL OF TARSUS

Saul tells us that he was a Jew born in Tarsus. The importance of Tarsus as the city of his birth and certainly his upbringing as a child should not be overlooked. He tells us he was a tentmaker, but whether he was an apprentice or a journeyman when he went to Jerusalem we do not know. We are told he sat at the feet of Gamaliel there, and we imagine he could not yet have been a full-grown adult. For he was still a "young man" at the time of the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58).

In nearly all of the principal characters dealt with in the Old and in the New Testaments, we have been obliged by the scarcity of detail to imagine what the childhood and youth of them could have been. We meet with this problem not only in the case of Jesus, but in every one of the disciples, and in the case of Paul, it is a truly regrettable blank. Therefore, it is necessary to consider what the city was in which he was born and the class of citizens who dwelt there.

It was on the main high road from the Greek west to the Assyrian east, a road that traversed the countries of many tribes and peoples we meet in the Scriptures. Its reputation as an intellectual center was great, and Strabo praised it for its culture. It stood upon the site of a very early foundation and its position was unique, for on the north it was backed by the Taurus Range, and on the south a narrow stream flowed down to the Mediterranean. It was not far from Mersin, where recent excavations have shown that cities in this area date back to the sixth millennium B.C.

We may judge that such a place was as cosmopolitan at the time of Paul's birth as any city mentioned in the Old Testament. Whether it rivaled in art and philosophy Athens or Rome we do not know, but it undoubtedly drew to it scholars and men of commerce from the four points of the compass. In a book of surprising novelty in research, *The Loom of History*, written by Professor Herbert J. Muller, there is a passage that is well worth quoting:

> In particular it took to Philosophy. Chrysippus, the successor of Zeno, came from Tarsus, and he was in turn succeeded as head of the Stoic school by Zeno of Tarsus. The city became the main seat of Stoicism. Strabo, who ranked its schools ahead of those of Athens and Alexandria in their ardor for philosophy and encyclopedic learning, remarked on the fluency of its inhabitants in lengthy, impromptu discourse on any given subject. . . .[1]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, New York, Harper, 1958, pp. 176-7.

In all likelihood, Mesopotamia, the countries of Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt would contribute to its population. We cannot be mistaken in thinking that its geographical position made it a place through which Greeks and Romans would pass on their way east and south.

Tarsus must have held a polyglot population at the time Saul was born. What the dominant speech was before Alexander's armies drove south has not been determined. Probably it was a blend of Hittite and Phoenician. One authority reminds us that there is an inscription in Cilicia, left by the Hittite king Azitawadda (700 B.C.) which is written in both Phoenician and "classical" Hittite.

Saul has been regarded by some of the scholars as an accomplished linguist. It is true this notion may be gathered from a study of Acts and the Epistles. But to credit a tentmaker with a knowledge of Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin is to present something of a prodigy. We cannot overlook the fact that his parents were Hellenized Jews. This did not debar them from the services of the synagogue, and it should be remembered that by this time the Septuagint could be read in Greek. To add to the confusion of tongues, we assume that the Romans under Pompey spoke Latin, and that for nearly two generations before Saul emerged from childhood, the administration of Cilicia would have been under Roman rule. Latin would have been the official language of the invader. In his Epistles, however, there is little to be derived from Roman sources. Still, passage after passage in his letters reminds us strongly that he had a fairly general knowledge of Greek authors.

The way in which he describes the meeting of the apparition of Jesus on the road to Damascus is expressed in Greek terminology—"it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts 9:5 and 26:14). It has about it the ring of the complaints of Io in the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus. Indeed, in a way it reminds us of the cry of Oedipus: "O Zeus, what hast thou willed to do with me!"

The Abbé Loisy points out that the above passage, as well as others attributed to Paul, bears the expression and tone of Greek influence. Although there is some division of opinion among critics about this matter, not one seems to take into consideration the fact that the area of the southern coast of Asia Minor to Lebanon and Syria had, for long years before the invasion of Alexander, communicated in thought and trade with Athens. This has been established by some of the very scholars who would have us think that Saul, living in Tarsus, remained ignorant of such powerful philosophical and cultural schools as those represented by Chrysippus and other famous teachers. If the report of Strabo can be accepted as a correct description of the Tarsus he knew, surely we may think that the educated people who lived there were permeated with Greek ideas. In such an atmosphere we cannot imagine Saul remaining impervious to the thought and culture of his townsfolk.

Notwithstanding, it is an error of judgment to suggest that the Stoic philosophy can be found anywhere in the Epistles. The doctrine of Zeno made no appeal to Saul. On the other hand, the influence of Gnosticism is plain in passage after passage in his letters. I could quote many sentences that are gnostic in quality and expression, such as "the third heaven" (II Cor. 12:2). The gnostic influence is especially apparent in his Epistles to the Galatians and the Colossians.

It is only by trying to understand the turmoil of the world at the beginning of this era that the fullness of the expectations can be appreciated. Uncertainty was the dread that was ever present in those days, and our historians reveal quite clearly that the religious and political beliefs of the past had not borne fruit. The historians of Greece and Rome, from the time of Socrates down to Seneca, give us ample evidence of the political and spiritual conditions that prevailed in the two great empires. If we take this as the starting point, the basis of our inquiry, we must revert to the initial movement of Paul after he sat at the feet of Gamaliel.

There is far more to be considered in the New Testament narrative of Paul than his conversion in Damascus. Upon it there hinges what I consider to be one of the most important matters of his career. If I may so state the position, the first part—that is, up to the time when Barnabas sought him in Tarsus to bring him to Antioch—is not fully described. There are many omissions and gaps that are left to the imagination to fill, and I know no critic, not even Klausner himself, who has brought forward these early years of his conversion as of great significance to the way in which the first Christian message spread in many directions.

After the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58), the narrative tells us that Paul was commissioned to go to Damascus and to arrest persons and bring them bound to Jerusalem. Who were these people, and how did Paul come to know about them? Also, we wonder how the high priest and elders (or Sadducees?) learned they were guilty of some offense not clearly explained. Taking this incident as a starting point, we are balked at once by other questions. Had Paul passed through Damascus on his way to Jerusalem when he first went there to sit at the feet of Gamaliel? If he did so, he probably learned then about the people who thought *in the way*, but we have no evidence of this.

This assumes an importance if we hope to find a clue to the early spread of what afterwards was called the Christian faith. There are at least two different stories of what happened in Damascus shortly after Saul was converted. In Acts 9 there is a Christian color to the story; in chapter 22, Paul's statement before Agrippa, there is a rather different direction given to Saul by Ananias. In this we gather that an orthodox Jew is directed by "the God of our fathers" to do certain things. Yet, in both accounts the aim of the mission to be undertaken by Paul includes Jew, Gentiles, kings—all men.

The confusion that arises from these conflicting stories does not seem to concern the scholars of today as it did the Bible students of two generations ago. Probably the reason for this is that the authors of recent books dealing with these problems do not know the literature on Paul that was circulated at the time of the Brotherhood Movement. I could name many works that deal with these matters, but just to mention three or four, there are Gerald Massey's *Paul the Gnostic Opponent of Peter*, Ignatius Singer's *The Rival Philosophies of Jesus and of Paul*, the *Essays and Lectures* of Bernard Bosanquet, and G.R.S. Mead's *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten.* Were critics keener then to smooth out these confusions than they are today? Although we have had several works by renowned critics, who have devoted large sections of their books to these problems of what really occurred, the contradictions that abound in Acts and in the Epistles have not yet been resolved.

It may not be amiss if we give a little more attention to the early years Paul passed in Palestine, so that we might have a clearer idea of what occupied his mind. He was not a Christian when he went to Jerusalem to sit at the feet of Gamaliel. Such an idea he did not hold. Some of the critics consider that he was a Hellenized Jew. The term "Hellenized" has been overworked by a good many. In Paul's case it might be said that he was a gnostic. A native of Tarsus could scarcely miss hearing about the beliefs of that sect, and there would be nothing strange in Paul's being one, for some of the critics show that for centuries before, the better-educated Jews were familiar with the tenets of Gnosticism.

In considering the medley of ideas Paul carried from Tarsus to Judea, we should note that at least six of the old cults survived in the city of his birth, and it is to a study of these cults that the student must be directed for the purpose of finding a reason for the commingling of doctrines which formed the basis for the Primitive Church. There were at least six forms of cult worship practiced down to the beginning of the Christian Era, and some of the writers tell us that there is evidence of the practices as late as the third century A.D.

What were these cults? Perhaps the oldest one was Orphism. Also, the worship of Mithras dates from an early time. Certainly the ideals of Zoroaster were known even before the reign of Cyrus, and the practices of the cult of Zagreus have been described by several authors who have given us learned books upon the ancient cults. It was, however, the doctrine of Gnosticism that seems to have lodged firmly in Paul's mind. Several of the critics make no reservation in calling him a gnostic, and although the opinions of the Bible scholars in regard to this are in some cases far apart, a study of the Epistles that are attributed to Paul leaves us in no doubt as to the dominant idea he formed before he left Tarsus. He could not have met with it in Judea, and how a youth obsessed with gnostic notions could sit at the feet of Gamaliel, no one has attempted to explain.

We wonder how the young Saul could have gathered any knowledge of the ceremonies of the mystery religions. He was a Jew and claimed Roman citizenship, and in all probability attended the services in the synagogue; but he would have been an exceptional youth to have spent time in gathering information about strange rituals. Moreover, we have been told that the doctrines and forms of service of the mystery cults were known only to the initiated. To others they were secret. It is possible that Paul found time to attend university courses and, as Tarsus was famous for its institutions of learning, a man of lively imagination such as he was would be drawn to them, and this would give him an opportunity of fraternizing with students who came there from distant parts.

Nevertheless, the more one reads in the works of the experts who have written upon the mystery cults, the more surprising it becomes that so many of them have found traces of them in his Epistles. He must have been a rare genius even for that day to blend successfully parts of the rituals of the mysteries into his conception of *the Christ*.

How strange it is that an epileptic is sometimes gifted with an acuity for grasping ideas of others as if by intuition. Several of the physicians and psychiatrists who have studied Paul have touched upon this talent. Still, Paul remains the mystery of mysteries in Bible lands after the death of Jesus. His temperament fitted urban places. There is no record of his visiting a hamlet or addressing a letter to villagers. The poor and needy, the meek and humble in Palestine were never the objects of his thought. His mind was given to the people of the great cities: Antioch, Athens, Rome, Ephesus. Controversy was the tonic that brought the best out of him. He was a bitter antagonist and despised those who did not agree with him. He could pour out a torrent of abuse at them, that was stinging and malicious. He cowed Peter and the rest of the disciples.

Yet, his work of uniting the small groups and founding the church, which arose to be the most vital spiritual and cultural movement the world has known, was that of an inspired organizer. Paul's genius for adapting and shaping into one course the chief ceremonies and rites of the old religious practices was not only unique but, once begun, remained the great basis upon which the Christian church was built.

Paul could not take the glad tidings of Jesus to the cities. From the disciples he would have learned that it would never do to tell the men of the marts that you cannot serve two masters. To preach such a doctrine in such places as Antioch, Athens, and Rome, where there were many slaves, would be to incite and bring him into the clutches of the State. In the Epistles and in Acts we learn how the worshipers of mammon were to be appeased and in place of the pronouncements of Jesus, slaves were advised to serve their masters.

Two or three years after the crucifixion, Paul got in touch with the

Temple authorities in Jerusalem. There was already a division of opinion between the disciples and the high priests and Sadducees, which had reached the critical stage. The preaching of Stephen was censured. He was arrested and sentenced to be stoned. So grave was the religious dispute that the disciples and their followers suffered from persecution.

It is well to remind the reader here that the adapters of Acts and the writers of the Epistles do not anywhere regard the importance of time, place or distance. We have to use our own imagination to table the events chronologically, determine the places where they occurred, and the time spent in journeying from one point to another. This is important at this stage because when Paul received instructions from the Temple authorities to bring certain persons in Damascus down to Jerusalem, we have no information at all as to when he started on his mission, how long it took him to reach Damascus, and whether he went on foot or rode. The reason for this questioning is that we are told in one place that the disciples were in and about Jerusalem, and in another version we learn that there were disciples in Damascus.

It must not be thought that I disparage the work of the critics of this generation when I record my opinion that the questioners of sixty years ago went further and deeper into these problems than they do today. One question that was frequently asked: "When did Saul of Tarsus, a Jew affected by gnostic ideas, become Paul, the Christian of Damascus?" As it stands, it does not by any means indicate the complicated issues that follow from it, and these were debated at length in many books and pamphlets during the period when Gerald Massey, Bernard Bosanquet and Ignatius Singer were read. I might add here that John M. Robertson's *Pagan Christs* was a work that had considerable influence at that time. However, it was the pamphlets that were issued by the so-called rationalists and agnostics that caused many Bible students to question their pastors at the time of the drift from the churches. Here is an example from Gerald Massey:

> . . . The matter of our Canonical Gospels is, to a large extent, mythical, and . . . the Gnosis of Ancient Egypt was carried into other lands by the underground passage of the Mysteries, to emerge at last as the literalised legend of Historic Christianity.
>
> . . . To-day we have to face a problem that is one of the most difficult; it is my object to prove that Paul was the opponent and not the apostle of Historic Christianity. . . .[2]

Let us start with Paul's own declaration when he went from Tarsus to Jerusalem to sit at the feet of Gamaliel. Now who was Gamaliel? It is accepted by the scholars that he was a member of the Sanhedrin; perhaps the head of that body. I think all of the great scholars agree that Gamaliel was a person who existed at the time Jesus visited Jerusalem during the week of Passover. Paul tells us that he sat at the feet of this Jewish scholar, who taught the Law (Torah)[3]:

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[2] *Paul the Gnostic Opponent of Peter*, London, 1893, p. 1.

> I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers . . . (Acts 22:3).

It is here that we must clearly determine that, at this time, Paul had not a single Christian idea in his head. But could he have been in Jerusalem as a pupil of Gamaliel during the last week of the life of Jesus? If we are to admit the probability of this, then we cannot possibly understand his admission that he did not see Jesus in the flesh. How could a Jewish Jew, whether born in Palestine or in other parts, live in Jerusalem during the week of the Passover, and remain ignorant of the trials of Jesus before the high priest and elders and, afterwards, by Pilate, and being given to the mob in preference to the agitator Barabbas? This is unthinkable. Are we then to decide that the critics who say he was there at that time do not accept his statement about his not seeing Jesus in the flesh?

Consider for the moment three scholars representing different views of these difficulties. Klausner devotes many pages to the probability of Paul knowing Jesus in the flesh.[4] His analysis is not worthy of him. In this matter the eminent Jewish scholar does not reveal his skill as an interpreter of the New Testament. He recognizes the fact, as it is recorded in Acts and also in Galatians, that Paul admitted that he had not seen Jesus in the flesh. Notwithstanding this, Klausner contends that it might have been probable. Either he did know Jesus in the flesh or he did not. If he did see him before the crucifixion, he would have known that he was a human being.

Side by side with a review of the deductions Klausner resorts to in this problem, we might cite three remarkable works by skilled critics that reveal other views. These are: *Jesus in His Time* by Daniel-Rops and the two startling works—*The Origins of the New Testament* and *The Birth of the Christian Religion*—by Alfred Loisy. It is really a disturbing experience to find opinions that differ so widely, but it must be admitted that it is a narrow circle that is concerned in solving these problems. The higher critics have the field to themselves, and the earnest student is left to make what attempts he can, in his amateur way, to reconcile the recordings concerning Paul in Acts and in the Epistles.

It will not matter much to add to the plethora of conjectures set forth by the scholars if I give to the Gospel student quite another notion of what took place in these early years before Paul went to Damascus. Still, let it be clearly understood that I do not pose as a theologian. All I can claim for myself is that I am a historian, looking for facts, and by temperament one who asks why a matter is so stated and what it portends in a narrative.

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[3] Klausner gives some new ideas about this period in Paul's life. The student might turn to *From Jesus to Paul*, p. 309.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 315-6.

Why? This bothersome word some theologians despise and would reject is the very lever of clear representation of what occurred. How are we to meet in reasoned conjecture this difficulty? How is it to be solved? My view of the problem is that *Paul did not sit at the feet of Gamaliel until after the crucifixion*. I think a very sound case can be made for this conception of the events. All agree that he was present at the stoning of Stephen, and the date of this calamity is put variously by different critics, as taking place from two to three years after the death of Jesus.

We have evidence in Acts concerning the stoning of Stephen, which goes some way towards helping us to solve this matter. Stephen was an exalted agent of a small group in or near Jerusalem, that had promulgated a religious interpretation of the current Jewish doctrine of Torah, which incensed the conservative views of the pious Jews. They rose in revolt against the new interpretation. It could not have been "Christian" in any respect, but it was contrary to the faith of those who held to the old doctrine. There is other evidence in connection with this part of the early days of Paul in Jerusalem that Gamaliel, during the period of the persecution of the new group, advised the Sanhedrin to deal leniently with it. How we are to reconcile this with what occurred afterwards, when Paul received a permit to go to Damascus to arrest certain persons, is not dealt with by any of the New Testament scholars.

The critics have given us various brief references to the group in Damascus, but not one I have read seems to fit into the development of the story. Was it possible for someone in authority, either in Syria or in Galilee, to suspect the intentions of this group (as the whole of that neighborhood at the time was in a ferment of sedition) and send to the authorities at Jerusalem for assistance? This idea has been put forward, but again it seems far fetched, for letters to deal with the group were asked of the religious, not the political, authorities. Who, then, sent word to Jerusalem about the group in Damascus? Up to this point in the narrative, we do not find a reference anywhere to Paul visiting Damascus before he went to sit at the feet of Gamaliel. To the ordinary reader this might seem an excursion into the unknowable, and scarcely worth the trouble of writing it out. I admit it may appear so, but upon it depends an understanding of the most startling event that gave birth to the Christian religion: Paul's meeting the apparition of Jesus on the road to Damascus, as he journeyed there to arrest the group who thought *in the way* of the one in Jerusalem.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONVERSION OF PAUL

The gap in the story yawns like an abyss—bridgeless, trailless—and leaves the explorer helpless to advance. How there were in Damascus any who were "of this way" at that early date is not revealed, and I know no higher critic who has offered a suggestion of how the new doctrine came to reach a place so far off so soon. We can accept the record of what happened in Jerusalem at the time of the persecution and the stoning of Stephen, but to accept the suggestion that the new ideas of his group traveled so quickly after the death of Jesus to a far-off city beyond the borders of Palestine is not reasonable. From what other source could they obtain the news of the new doctrine? It could come from one place only, and that was Jerusalem.

Now it may be said that some of the disciples, after the flight from Gethsemane, followed the instruction to meet Jesus in Galilee, and others did not obey it but returned to the neighborhood of Jerusalem. This is possible, but there is nothing in either Acts or the Epistles that conveys such an idea. Who but the disciples was interested in the promise of the risen Christ? As yet there were no Christians in Palestine. Paul was not converted; indeed, he was employed to persecute the group of which Stephen was an agent.

If we are to accept the Gospel narratives of the rapidity with which the *Christian idea* spread to districts as far north as Damascus and Antioch, we must surely ask who the bearers of the good tidings were. But neither Acts nor the Epistles tells us who the harbinger was, or how and when he entered upon his mission to convert Jew and Gentile. It is most unlikely that all this came from the north. Jerusalem was the only place from which the spread of the new Gospel could have its source.

Another problem connected with these perplexing ones, that must be taken into consideration, is the Jewish heterodox formation of a group in Jerusalem within a year or two of the death of Jesus. Several of our critics have given us their opinions of the nature of the doctrinal revolt. Who composed this group? Were they disciples of Jesus? We know they fled after the night at Gethsemane and that they were instructed by the women at the open tomb to go into Galilee to meet the risen Christ. They could not be in Jerusalem and in Galilee at the same time, or indeed even within a month or two. One version has it that they were "upbraided" by the risen Christ for "their unbelief" (Mark 16:14), and that they were instructed to carry the glad tidings far afield from Palestine. These peculiar difficulties of time and distance in the narrative, as we glean it from Acts and the Epistles, may never be solved.

The period after the stoning of Stephen was one of the most momentous for Paul. Indeed, it might be said without challenge that if he had not received papers from the Temple authorities to arrest those in Damascus who thought *in the way* [of Jesus], there would have been no Christianity. Hence, it is necessary, if we are trying to get a clear notion of what took place, that we should go deeply into the events of Paul's conversion and the consequence of it. Joseph Klausner, in *From Jesus to Paul*, gives a most enlightening analysis of Paul's mission, and in it there are several ideas expressed that are not touched upon by Christian authors. When I read this work I was amazed to find that in some important details I had been thinking along the lines that Klausner follows, and these I shall refer to when I deal with the events that reveal them.

Klausner begins the story of Paul's mission with the suggestion that some of the disciples in Jerusalem, at the time of the stoning of Stephen and the persecutions that ensued, fled to Damascus, a distance of more than a hundred miles. But what about the political conditions of Samaria and Galilee? Galilee was torn by dissension, and several of our authors writing on that period say it was seething with unrest. Under such circumstances, we are not wrong in thinking that it would take a long time to reach the city at the north. Who were these disciples? Not one of the original eleven, left after the death of Iscariot, is named as leaving Jerusalem. After the vacancy was filled by Matthias (Acts 1:26), we are led to believe that there were twelve in Jerusalem at the time when Stephen and Philip were chosen, with others, to serve at the table of the disciples.

To what extent the disciples in Jerusalem attempted to convert Jews to the faith of Jesus as a messiah (using the term in a purely Jewish sense—a political leader of the line of the House of David) is not told. But after the crushing disappointment of the crucifixion, followed by the panic that struck the twelve and raised doubts in their minds about the validity of the idea that they held of the coming of the kingdom, we can infer that they were in no frame of mind to convert Jew or Gentile. Nevertheless, they had provoked the Temple authorities, and they were made to suffer for it.

Klausner, in his abosrbing description of what happened in this period, throws no light upon the question of how the Temple authorities received news from Damascus that there was a sect there causing wonderment and agitation among the Jews, both Hellenized and orthodox. There are many details of this nature missing in the story, and it is surprising that Klausner does not deal with them.

The sect of the Zadokites in Damascus, mentioned by Klausner, does not in any way help to solve the problem but does tend to confuse the issue. In what way could the disciples at Jerusalem be in touch with the Zadokites at Damascus, and how could there be any resemblance between their teaching and that of Jesus, or even that of the disciples at this stage?

Klausner also dwells at great length upon the matter of circumcision, and says that, in all probability, Stephen was guilty of minimizing the necessity of this rite. There is much confusion in this, for the emphasis is transferred. After Stephen offended the Temple authorities, was there any reason for raising the question of circumcision? Who were the Gentiles in and about Jerusalem that might become converts? And what in the teaching of the disciples would interest them? After the crucifixion, every hope the disciples had held during the lifetime of Jesus of the coming of a messiah was shattered. Stephen, no doubt, addressed himself to orthodox Jews. What was the teaching that offended the high priest and elders? There are different interpretations to be found in several works published during the past ten years, but none suggests that he had advocated the abandonment of the circumcision rite. When did the problem of circumcision arise and become a troublesome matter that concerned not only the Hellenistic Jews but also the Gentiles who were likely to become converts? The heated debates that took place over this did not occur until very much later. In raising the question of female proselytes in Damascus immediately after Stephen was stoned, does not Klausner anticipate events that occurred later?

When all is said and done about these strange accounts of the new religion of the risen Christ, it cannot be denied that the message was carried far and near by evangelists, who took wing years before Paul left Tarsus (for the second time) to go, at the behest of Barnabas, to Antioch. The world, waiting for a cataclysmic change, was ready to receive word of the coming of the new day. All was ripe for the reception of the glad tidings, save of course the political authorities; but their intervention did not come until years after the meek and humble (and, later, the well-to-do) embraced the theory of the risen Christ. It reached as far as Ephesus, and yet we wonder how and by whom it was carried beyond the borders of Palestine.

In considering his conversion as the turning point in Paul's career, we cannot overlook the three different narratives of what happened to him when he met the apparition on the road to Damascus. Several of the higher critics attribute the origin of the story to a fit of epilepsy to which Paul was subject.

In the Epistles accredited to him, Paul has described his physical condition so minutely that some of the critics have concluded he was a victim of "falling sickness" (epilepsy). Joseph Klausner devotes many pages to a review of the evidence Paul has given of this affliction.[1] Some of his complaints are couched in mystical terms, but they do not change the nature of his troubles. It is true a diagnosis of his case is better understood by a physician who is a psychologist as well. I share the opinion that there is good reason to think that Paul's affliction was a form of epilepsy.

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[1] *From Jesus to Paul*, pp. 325-30.

The experts quoted by Klausner and other Jewish authorities put forth the idea that victims of abnormal conditions may conjure up visions, and suggest that the disturbed mind and spirit are, in certain cases, prone to imagine seeing "phenomena" of the supernatural. I admit that all this is quite possible in certain circumstances of health (I have never forgotten the visions that came to me when I was suffering from typhoid fever; they are as real to me today as they were when I became convalescent).

It is not a problem of the accuracy of the report of this amazing experience given by Paul. What really concerns us is that there should be three quite different accounts of what occurred. In each one Paul puts the same question to the apparition: "Who art thou, Lord" (9:5, 22:8, 26:15)? When this was asked, he was not yet blinded by the light and did not recognize the specter as that of Jesus. If this be so, then it goes far towards substantiating his declaration that he did not know Jesus in the flesh.

The other questionable point in the story is the notion that Jesus spoke Hebrew:

> And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (Acts 26:14).

This version of the meeting differs from the other two (Acts 9:4 and 22:7) by introducing the suggestion that Jesus spoke Hebrew.

Paul was not a disciple, but is described as the "Apostle to the Gentiles." He is presented as a man who can be easily conceived as a reality. In many respects he is his own biographer. In Acts and in the Epistles we are given information that will enable us to reconstruct the figure of the true founder of Christianity. There is no one in the literature of the world that surpasses Paul in indefatigable missionary zeal. Christianity is unthinkable without him. He was the genius who gave to men of the mystery cults the hope of a new world and salvation of soul. His invincible courage against bitter odds was shown many times.

Here it should be brought to the notice of the student that a part of the story has been treated in several ways by the critics. After the incident of the apparition, he was taken into Damascus by those who were accompanying him upon the journey. He had been told by it to go into the city, where he would learn what he was chosen to perform:

> And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do (Acts 9:6).

When he reaches the city, he meets Ananias, who is described as "a devout man according to the law" (22:12). May we take it that this description of the man Paul was to seek for counsel was a Jew of the old persuasion, that is, a Jew of Torah? Until we have more information from the critics of the Gospels and Epistles, let us assume that the group headed by Ananias in Damascus was in no respects a Christian one.

When Paul's sight was restored, he was baptized and received meat and was strengthened. Then comes the surprising statement that he remained "certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus" (Acts 9:19). The book of the Acts of the Apostles is accredited to Luke, who was the author of the Third Gospel. In style it is so different from anything else in the New Testament that many have held various ideas of the way it was put together. In the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Dr. James Vernon Bartlet suggests that Luke was not only the physician in attendance upon Paul, but that he accompanied him upon some of his journeys. As a conjecture this may stand, but it does not help us to know how the version in Acts of the Damascus scenes came to the knowledge of the writer. It may, of course, be said that if Luke accompanied Paul on his journey, he may have learned it from him. Paul's own version of the meeting with Jesus on the road to Damascus (Galatians) presents it as a purely spiritual experience. It all took place within him. No external phenomena were present. Paul says:

> For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. . . .
>
> But when it pleased God . . . to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood (Gal. 1:12, 15-16).

With this sudden conversion from Saul to Paul, two entirely different missions were imposed upon him in a very short time. He did not return to Jerusalem immediately after his conversion, and the critics have given sound reasons why it was not possible. Some make the plausible suggestion that the shock of meeting the risen Christ on the road to Damascus was so soul-quaking that Paul went into Arabia for three years (Gal. 1:17), where, after deep meditation, he fathomed to his own satisfaction the meaning of it all. No one will quarrel with this interpretation of what followed.

It is not at all likely that within a few days after the revelation he had become a complete convert and had clearly defined in his mind the doctrine that he would preach. It takes time for such inspirations to mature. The idea may come momentarily, but how to express it in understandable terms is quite another matter and calls for deep consideration.

However, there may be another reason why, after he left Damascus, he did not go straight to Jerusalem to confer with the disciples who were there. He may have asked himself how it was possible with any degree of safety to return to the place where the religious authority had given him consent to persecute those in Damascus who were "of this way." It seems to me that would be the first problem he would have to face after his conversion.

It is a pity we know so little about what went on in the mind of Paul when he sought the loneliness of some place in Arabia. All we can surmise from that experience of meditation is that he decided to retire to Tarsus for "eight or nine years,"[2] and there formulate what had been precious in the cults into a religious design that would fit the mystery of the risen Christ.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 337.

CHAPTER VII

PAUL AND CHRISTIANITY

The task of the editors of the Gospels, as set forth in the Douay and the King James versions, was one of shaping the events to fit the prophecies. They were forced to do this by the needs of the Gentile groups, or would it not be more correct to say, the *ecclesia*. Many of the scholars admit that it is no easy task to separate the historical matter from the legends that were invented especially for the needs of the Pauline doctrine. This should be plain, for Paul was not known until after the crucifixion, and he admits that he did not see Jesus in the flesh. On this matter there is a difference of opinion, for some of the critics concede the probability of his being in Jerusalem at the time of the trial.

When we turn to Acts and read the stories of the differences which brought the disciples into opposition with Paul, we cannot avoid the notion that an entirely new doctrine had brought about the crisis in the thought of the twelve.

The messiah of Paul was not that of Peter and James. Hence, we must go to work carefully to discover in the first two Gospels the adaptations and insertions that became necessary for a much later doctrinal need, which was foreign to the minds of those who had been associated with Jesus. As explained previously, we find nothing in Matthew or Mark which convinces us that they had any other idea than the coming of the messiah, in the Jewish sense of the term. No one then imagined a mystical figure who would appear after death.

Which of the disciples ever dreamed—much less thought—that the sayings of Jesus would be needed by a church? The term "church" used during the lifetime of Jesus antedates the first knowledge that the disciples after the crucifixion had of a group called Christians. This information came to them some fourteen or fifteen years after Jesus died, and it was from Antioch in Syria, not in Galilee, they learned there was such a group.

The word "church"—meaning, in the first case, a small group of Hellenized men, undoubtedly serfs or the most humble of creatures—could never have entered the minds of the disciples before the crucifixion. Nor is there a shred of evidence that Jesus thought of such an organization. This is where the Pauline doctrine superseded the missions of the disciples. It came after apostles were added to the group and not before.

The *Encyclopaedia Biblica* contains an acceptable definition of the term "church" and gives us an insight into its history:

> The word *Ecclesia* has an important history behind it when it first appears in Christian literature. It was the regular designation of the assembly of the whole body of citizens in a free Greek state, "called out" or summoned to the transaction of public business. It had then been employed by the Greek translators of the OT as a natural rendering of the Hebrew . . . , the whole "congregation" of Israel, regarded in its entirety as the people of God. . . .[1]

From this definition it should be plain to the student that the word has been used in two quite different ways. Not many of the critics seem to be aware of this use of the word by the disciples and Paul after the death of Jesus. However, one of the few who has recognized this peculiar problem is Dr. E. W. Barnes, formerly Bishop of Birmingham. He quotes in full Matthew 16:17-18, and then presents an argument that caused much surprise among certain Anglican clergymen:

> . . . It is a clumsy anticipation of later developments to make Jesus speak of "my church." The theme of his preaching was the kingdom of God. His mission, as he conceived it, was to call men to join this kingdom: he had not set out to found a church. . . .[2]

A challenging view coming from high dignitaries in the Church of England brought many young clergymen to the realization that the time had come for a reconsideration of the Pauline gospel.

However, Dr. Barnes was not the only one at that period to deal with this momentous problem of the use of the word "church" in the First Gospel. There also appeared a work by Professor T. W. Manson, Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis in the University of Manchester and Fellow of the British Academy. In *The Sayings of Jesus*, the author deals with the use of the term in a searching, scholarly way. His decision is remarkably candid. He says:

> . . . There does not seem to be any good reason against regarding these verses as a genuine part of the Gospel. . . . Mark knows nothing of this strong commendation of Peter. . . . The absence of the saying from the Marcan account is very difficult to explain. . . .
>
> The word "church" occurs only here and in Matthew 18:17 in the Gospels. Both passages are suspect. This suspicion does not rest merely on the fact that the word occurs only twice. . . . The difficulty is that this word occurs in Matthew here in a saying which has no parallel in Mark, though Mark records the incident.[3]

Dr. Manson's work should not be neglected by the student of the Gospels, because it marks a change in the use of this word, which may lead to a far better understanding of the early days of small groups, in Palestine and the countries to the north, that became united to promote the new religion.

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[1] "Church," by Rev. J. Armitage Robinson, *loc. cit.*, I, 820.

[2] *The Rise of Christianity*, 1947, p. 184.

[3] *Op. cit.*, London, SCM Press, reprinted 1950, p. 202.

Regarding the question of how the disciples were able to form themselves, at a time of persecution, into a body spreading the new Gospel, some of the higher critics reject this story. Indeed, Canon B. H. Streeter tells us:

> . . . To understand the history of early Christianity we must begin by eliminating from our minds the traditional picture of the Twelve Apostles sitting at Jerusalem, like a College of Cardinals, systematising the doctrine, and superintending the organisation, of the Primitive Church.[4]

There is no account in the Gospels or Acts of when and how the disciples returned from Galilee to Jerusalem (if they went to Galilee at all), but we do find that they gathered together again. Whether or not the instruction given to them by the women after the risen Christ appeared was strictly obeyed is simply a matter of conjecture. Nevertheless, we are surprised to find them in Jerusalem while the persecution was in progress.

A grave crisis had arisen. No one can doubt this who reads the account in Acts, for the ideas of Paul soon appeared to be quite different from those held by the disciples. It is evident that they were not mentally equipped to withstand the attack of Paul. They were simple men of no schooling but the Law, and had but one hope, which was the coming of a messiah of Davidic descent.

We have already quoted Joseph Klausner's statement about the physical power of the Jewish messiah. He says, further:

> The conception both of the Jewish Messiah and of the Christian Messiah has changed from period to period. . . . Jesus himself understood his Messiahship very differently from the way in which Paul taught. . . .[5]

It should be plain that the spiritual philosophy of Jesus is quite bare of any such idea as was held by Peter or Paul. How could an ideal of self-repentance, based upon the principle that you cannot serve two masters, have impressed the disciples with the notion that a mystical messiah was to be looked for? They were imbued with one idea, and that was the coming of a Jewish messiah. They undoubtedly believed that "the kingdom of God is at hand" meant that their long-awaited ruler was to appear. And it is not stretching a point to say that some of them imagined that Jesus was really that messiah.

There were no Christians in Palestine during the lifetime of Jesus. Not

[4] *The Primitive Church*, London, Macmillan, 1929, p. 38.

[5] *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, p. 519; *cf.* also *supra* p. 343.

one of the scholars has suggested that there were any beyond its borders. The Christian idea came somewhat late in the life of Paul. It was not until after Barnabas sought Paul in Tarsus and took him to Antioch that the idea was formulated. It is necessary to have this clearly in the mind if the Gospels are to be read with understanding. There are many books written by the experts upon how to read the Gospels, but I do not remember one that clearly indicates that Matthew and Mark were composed about a generation after Jesus died and that they were for a special purpose, which was in no way connected with his mission.

The Gospel critics today seem to approach an understanding of the New Testament not from the beginning of the mission of Jesus, but by taking as their starting point the works of Pauline origin, which were circulated among the small groups outside of Palestine that later became churches. This view is not only out of chronological order, but is also glaringly contradictory. For it cannot be demonstrated that Jesus gave a thought to such a body as that which could be called a church. Moreover, to concentrate attention upon the work performed by the disciples and others in the missions outside of Galilee is to shift the focal point from Jesus to Paul.

The introductory verses to the first two Gospels refer to entirely separate figures. The coupling of the term "Christ" to that of "Jesus" is Pauline. There is no evidence that the disciples looked for a mystical figure until they came in contact with Paul. The glad tidings they were to take to the lost sheep of Israel were simple and easily comprehended. The precise instruction to the disciples to "go not into the way of the Gentiles" but "rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" stands firm against the object of Paul, who perhaps was quite ignorant of it when he set to work to convert the Gentiles to his doctrine. Paul ignored the Jews in Palestine. How much he learned from Peter when he visited him in or near Jerusalem, as we learn it in Galatians 1:18, is not clear. All we can gather from this is that there was no agreement. If that were the case, is it admissible to think that Peter still adhered to the spirit of the instruction Jesus gave to him and the others that the glad tidings were especially for the lost sheep of Israel, and not for the Gentiles? How helpful it would be to an understanding of this momentous meeting if we knew the problems that were discussed by Paul and Peter during those epoch-making fifteen days. I venture the conjecture that it was then Paul heard for the first time the story of the crucifixion, the burial, the empty tomb and the meeting of the disciples with the risen Jesus in Galilee. From no other source could Paul have learned of these events. Although he claimed to be a Jew of Tarsus and a Roman citizen, he could not then have held strictly to the Law and Jewish conceptions of the messiah. There is a significant passage in Acts which is one of the few that throws a light upon the minds of the disciples:

> Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,
> And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. . . .
>
> . . . They set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,
> Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.
> Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.
> The God of our father raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree (Acts 5:17-18, 27-30).

How can there be doubt lingering in the minds of Gospel scholars about the doctrine preached by the disciples at this time? There is no mention of Christ in Peter's reply to the high priest and the council. And we may take it that the altercation that had arisen about the doctrine preached by Peter and his companions was conducted verbally in Aramaic. How can it be supposed that Greek was the language that was used on this occasion? It took place in Jerusalem, not in one of the cities to the north of Galilee, where there were Hellenized Jews who knew some Greek. Although contradictions abound, we are left in no doubt that Peter and the other disciples were preaching the doctrine of Jesus, to the consternation of the Sadducees, the high priest and the elders.

It is a disheartening task for the student in quest of information about the growth of the idea of Paul's Christology to read many of the works that have been written upon his life and mission. The story is complicated enough in Acts and in the Epistles, but the scholars add to our confusion by giving us interpretations and conjectures completely different from one another. I am inclined to the opinion that it was in the eight or nine years spent at Tarsus that he had time to think things out. He would have the quiet necessary to transmute the information he had gathered from Peter and others about the Life of Jesus and mold it into a mystical doctrine he later was to preach. The flowering of the plant Paul had grown from strange seed did not come into full bloom all at once. The flower developed slowly from the bud and gradually unfolded itself, petal after petal, reaching perfection long after the grower of it had passed away.

EPILOGUE

The new faith of Paul for nearly a century after he passed away made slow progress in the cities of the north and west of Palestine. As it spread, the opposition to it increased mightily, and there were periods when the missioners were threatened with extermination. Torture and massacre seemed to be the order of the day. The story of the sorrows of the Early Fathers told by Tertullian and Lactantius is one of horror.

The Bible student who would know the tribulations of the successors of Paul in the apostolic work that was carried on by such champions of the new faith as Ignatius and Polycarp should read Professor F. A. Wright's book, *Fathers of the Church*.[1] It may be hard for the student to find a copy today for it was published over thirty years ago. Professor Wright held the chair of Classics in the University of London.

We read from this work that the chief concern of the men of the new faith in the second century was matters of dogma, and these included every debatable question from the Virgin birth to the Last Supper. The organization of the churches did not present the difficulties the dogmatists had to encounter. But it is of interest to read how the officials, deacons and presbyters came into being under the direction of the bishop. For two centuries and a half after the burning of Rome, the cataclysm that was looked for by those of the old and the new faiths came in a form wholly unexpected by religionists. The catastrophe that struck was of an entirely secular origin, and when it shook the world, the might of imperial Rome was shattered.

Professor Wright's description of it is in accordance with the opinions of the historians of the time. He sums it up in this way:

> How it was that a civilization which had lasted for so many centuries and had spread over so large a portion of the globe was brought down in such disastrous ruin is a question which has always excited the most lively interest. Economists have argued that the causes were chiefly financial, the constant drain of gold eastwards for the purchase of luxuries, the gradual impoverishment of the land in the countries round the Mediterranean, the economic disadvantages inherent in slave labour, and the heavy taxation rendered necessary by state socialism and a large standing army. . . .[2]

How it was possible for the new Church to survive during this period no one has been able to explain, for it was threatened with disruption not only by the economic decay of Rome; it had, besides, to deal with the heresies which were so fiercely debated that the bishops were forced to appeal to Constantine at the Council of Nicaea to make the new religion a legal one.

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[1] London, George Routledge and Sons, 1928.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Some of the scholars who have dealt with this period have either overlooked or ignored the idea put forward by certain historians that it was not Rome or Athens or Antioch that became the center of learning, which produced some of the most extraordinary men of the third and fourth centuries. Alexandria had supplanted Athens as a center of philosophers, and indeed Platonism might have languished sorely had it not been for the persistent desire of many of its adherents to preserve the Socratic tradition.

Celsus was the first of the Alexandrian philosophers to question the new religion of Paul. However, it is to Origen we owe our knowledge of the intellectual powers exerted by this eclectic Greek, as Celsus is called, and the extent of his study of the Gospels. His repudiation of the Virgin birth is found in his declaration that "Jesus was the natural son of Mary and Joseph." There is not a question that has been considered by Gospel critics for hundreds of years that he did not deal with. His work was called *The True Word* and the date given to its publication is A.D. 176-180. The student who desires to know more of him may turn to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and read the biographical note under his name. Better still, he might read Origen's work, *Contra Celsum*.[3]

There arises a problem in this matter of the opposition of Celsus that has not been brought to the fore by any of the scholars that I have read, and it is this: From what source came the information Celsus had of the first two Gospels? It is not sufficient to say that he was in possession of them. My opinion is that Celsus had the first Greek translation from the Aramaic, in which there would not be any of the Pauline interpolations inserted in Matthew and Mark solely for the purpose of appeasing the Gentile doubters in the cities to the north and west. We are now confronted with another problem, if this idea is to be maintained: How did the Aramaic version (if there was one) and the first Greek translation of it reach Alexandria? This is not such a formidable matter to work out.

The exodus from Judea, which took place at the time of the fall of Jerusalem in the year A.D. 70, must have included the better-educated and wealthier classes, and if they had any documents dealing with the affairs that occurred in Jerusalem at the time of Pilate, we may be sure that they carried them to their new abode. This is merely a supposition, but it seems quite plausible.

When I read Clement of Alexandria's work, *The Exhortation to the Greeks*,[4] I was deeply impressed with certain passages in it that savored of the philosophy of Jesus. Clement was the master of Origen.

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[3] Trans. by Henry Chadwick, Cambridge University Press, 1953.

[4] Trans. by G. W. Butterworth, Loeb Classical Library, London, Heinemann, New York, Putnam's, 1919.

Arius, presbyter and deacon, whose opposition to the tenets of the new faith was so fiercely contested by the Early Fathers of the Church, was an Alexandrian. So was Athanasius, who turned Christian and gave the Church one of its creeds.

There is far more research work to be done by the scholars than has been produced so far. It is surprising how meager are the records of the work of the new evangelists in the cities in the north and the west. When we examine closely the progress of the controversies of the time, we cannot help being impressed with the idea that it was in Alexandria they had information denied to the missioners elsewhere.

For a thorough investigation of the perilous controversies that raged before the meeting of the Council of Nicaea, I would advise the student to read Jacob Burckhardt's *The Age of Constantine the Great.*[5] In it he will find one of the best accounts of the disputes and the points of difference that split the bishops of the new faith into sections that were bitterly opposed; and Burckhardt gives us some facts of the methods the eastern prelates exercised to pack the council against those who were inclined to favor the Arian heresy. The result was the legalization of the new religion, and Constantine became a Christian.

While all this turmoil of spirit and mind was taking place at the new seat of power at the Bosphorus, there were two minds occupied with a totally different idea of what position the Church should hold in the affairs of the world. Ambrose in Milan and Augustine at Hippo turned from the quarrels concerning dogma, and in thought and action reversed the decisions of the eastern Church and Constantine. It has been overlooked by many scholars that the fate of the Christian ideal would have been quite other than it became if it had not been for the work of Ambrose and his pupil at Hippo. They completely reversed in idea the notion of a State religion, and I urgently advise the student of this critical period to apply his mind to the extraordinary revolution that took place when Ambrose brought Theodosius to his knees in repentance, and Augustine in imperishable sentences defined God's justice.

What a work there is for a student who will write this story! It remains to be done, because the minds of men who have dealt with this period in Church history have been given to the details of doctrine. May it be said that Ambrose and Augustine linked the new essentials of a true faith to the old and established Law as it was laid down by Moses? They were conscious of the choice that was to be made:

> I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live (Deut. 30:19).

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[5] Trans. by Moses Hadas, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956, esp. pp. 301 ff.

The choice given to the Israelites stands, and it is as valid for us today as it was for them.

The Dark Ages that followed were not clearly understood until Émile Mâle and his associates investigated the monuments erected by the workers of the new faith. In his volumes on the religious art of the Middle Ages[6] he discovered that at this time "all was light." Another work dealing with this period that should not be overlooked by the student is *The Dark Ages* by Professor W. P. Ker.[7]

How surprising it is to the student to learn how much historically still remains to be done for a connected account of the astounding revolution that took place when Benedict founded his monastery at Monte Cassino in 529. Was there ever such complete harmony of purpose in any endeavor as that of Benedict and Gregory the Great, coming within the same century? What would Christianity have been without either? There stems from this period the supremacy of the Church over the State. Again, a link was forged with the ideal of Moses. A kingdom of priests, if not in actual service, they were, as John of Salisbury said, the counsellors of kings and advised them upon "the law and custom of the land." For nearly a thousand years, despite religious wars, internal dissensions, massacres, and other failings, the Orders that were brought into being by Benedict and Gregory the Great survived. Where is there to be found such a record of this enduring achievement as is unfolded in English and French history? Abbots of monasteries anointed kings, crowned and counseled them.

For about one hundred fifty years prior to the end of the fifteenth century, the Christian world was torn by dissension, and its chance of survival was threatened by the economic woe suffered by the people of all countries: wars, a Pope at Rome and a Pope at Avignon, luxury and laxity undermining many of the monastic houses, the disastrous economic consequences of the Black Plague, uprisings of the peasants, the Wars of the Roses and many other calamities. The rest of the story is extant, and one sure fact can be established from the history of that time until this day—no inimical threat or action has altered the persistence of the law of God as expressed by the prophets of Israel and Jesus.

What is the command indelibly marked in the mind of those devoted to the reign of God on earth who seek that His will be done? Was it not expressed by the prophet of Nazareth:

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[6] *L'art religieux de la fin du Moyen Age en France* (2e éd., Paris, Librairie Armand Colin, 1922). *L'art religieux du xiiie Siècle en France* (5e éd., Paris, Librairie Armand Colin, 1923); *L'art religieux du xiie Siècle en France* (Paris, Librairie Armand Colin, 1924).

[7] First published by William Blackwood and Sons, 1904; republished in London, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1955.

> Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16).

Every cultural blessing we enjoy came from men who shunned for eight hundred years the world of mammon. They gave to arts and crafts a universal tongue. Their works spoke one language, understood by all. Is it not time for us to learn it anew, so that we may devote ourselves to deeds that bind us in love to the Creator?

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